

ANTIQUITY OF THE HOLY ROYAL ARCH

The Supreme Degree in Freemasonry

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TO
THE SUPREME GRAND CHAPTER
governing
THE HOLY ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER OF JERUSALEM
in England
the Author
most loyally
dedicates his book
the product of prolonged and patient inquiry

Printed in Great Britain

FOREWORD

FREEMASONRY is a fact which calls for explanation. Hitherto we have been satisfied with saying that its origin was shrouded in mystery, but we claim that the riddle has at last been solved.

Most Masonic writers have been ransacking history expecting to find a Brotherhood of exactly the same character as modern Freemasonry, and, of course, they have been disappointed. They erred through not making due allowance for the changes that have taken place in the age-long process of its evolution. Its prototype was very different from the finished product. In tracing the origin of the movement it was necessary to pay less attention to the forms and ceremonies and more to the principles that underlie it.

Freemasonry has been evolved, as we shall see, out of something which even in the

Middle Ages was very ancient; something which links modern Europe with ancient Babylon, and which brings the Companions into fellowship with primeval man.

We have written for R.A. Masons. If any Mason has not yet come into the Chapter, he should not read this book, for if he does he will find it far from satisfying; probably he will feel mystified; and this could scarcely be otherwise, because we have done our best to conceal our secrets, adopting the parabolic style and describing the shadow in terms which are only true of the substance.

Our original idea was to establish the antiquity of R.A. Masonry, which so many Masonic writers have rashly denied; but we had not gone very far in that task ere we realised that incidentally we were revealing the comparative modernity of Craft Masonry, which, be it said once for all, is not a thing apart, but an outgrowth of the Royal Arch. This, we fear, will come as a shock to many of the accredited exponents of the Craft.

Only one apology we can offer, namely, that all along we have refrained from theorising.

We have eschewed fables and romance; we have scrupulously avoided building on mere conjecture. We simply hold up to the Brethren the Mirror of History that they may judge for themselves.

Alas! most of the present-day Masons are indifferent to our noble past and to our glorious traditions, if not altogether to the intellectual side of Freemasonry. They are content with the sociability they find inside the Fraternity and ask no questions. Of course they support our magnificent Charities and are proud of the work done.

But the old "Speculative Craft" is in danger of losing its *speculative* character. The aims of our Ancient Brethren were three: Brotherly Love, Charity, and Mutual Instruction in "the Truth." And this last is as important as the other two. The casual Mason, therefore, loses much.

The intricacies of the Kabbalistic system may remind us of the Winding Staircase in K.S.T.; but we should remember that that Staircase was intended to lead us up to the Throne of God Himself.

On the Crown of the Great King (of whom

the M.E.Z. is the humble representative) there is a jewel of inestimable value; and one of the purposes of this book is to call attention to that jewel that it may be duly appreciated and treasured up.

It is an old truth that from the beginning of time there has been a Universal Reason presiding over the Cosmos; that the said Universal Reason was "with God," and that, in fact, it was identical with "God." That thought lies at the foundation of all Freemasonry.

Moreover, we find that in Nature, and especially in Man, "the Beloved of God," the *Microcosm*, that is to say, "the world in miniature," God manifests Himself as a combination of three distinct powers: Mind, Will, Emotion. And this fact has inspired the Royal Arch and accounts for much of its symbolism.

We sincerely hope that the following pages will help to clear up much that hitherto has been more or less enigmatic. "*Post fata resurgo!*" The Sun of Truth has dawned upon us!

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ANTIQUITY OF THE HOLY ROYAL ARCH

CHAPTER I

THE ELEMENTS OF THE ROYAL ARCH

MASONIC Manuals are a relatively new thing. At one time Masons would commit nothing to writing, except the outline of their history, which was rehearsed at every Initiation under the name of "Charges." And even in that narrative any historic fact that might lead outsiders to infer any detail of their Secret Art was disguised, of which practice we have a good example in the pseudonyms adopted for designating our M., H.A.

This reticence gives a tremendous advantage to those reckless critics who argue that Speculative Freemasonry is merely a product of the eighteenth century; for they persistently demand proof for the contrary view, and as we know there are many things which by

their very nature are incapable of proof or at least of such proof as the critics will accept.

We must, however, disabuse our minds of the idea that Freemasonry has ever been a secret society; it is a Society that has secrets, but there is nothing clandestine about it. From the first the Brethren realised that if their system of learning was to be duly honoured and valued, there must be the most inviolable secrecy; it is in vain, therefore, that we look for any secrets in written documents.

Nowadays, we place our Rituals in the hands of the Companions generally, including the Ceremonies of Installation to the Chairs, and only the really essential things are left in blank. Anyone, therefore, who is enterprising enough can form a fairly clear idea of what is done in the Chapter; but yet our secrets are safe and not likely to be penetrated by means of the Ritual. Nor is there any need of Masons prying, for whenever a Brother is found worthy of participating in the truths preserved in the Royal Arch we are always ready to admit him, and no impediment is ever placed in his way.

In Craft Masonry we see that the Building Art has given its complexion to it. But it is not until we reach the Chapter that we discover how or why our mystic philosophy came to be termed "Masonry"; for there, in the course of our Ceremonies, we supply every Candidate with "proper working implements," preparatory for the work he will have to do before he can attain to the exalted position of a Companion. Afterwards, when he has made certain discoveries, he is at once divested of the "implements of labour," and is invested with a new character; everything now changes, and henceforth not the work of the builder, but the Theosophy of the Kabbalist will engage his attention and inspire all his actions.

Let us, therefore, review the leading facts of this Supreme Degree and note the differences as compared with Craft Masonry.

The essential number of Officers of the Chapter has always been the same—nine, three times three. There has been some change in the nomenclature, but we still retain the number. Originally they used to be designated as follows:—

Three Principals: a High Priest, a King, and a Chief Scribe, who were regarded as co-equal, although one of them was *primus inter pares*.

Then the Captain of the Host, the Principal Sojourner, and the R.A. Captain.

Lastly, the three Grand Masters guarding the three Arches by which the three orders of Masons—the E.A., the F.C., and the M.M.—were represented.

And here it is necessary to explain that the names of Zerubbabel, Haggai, and Joshua, commonly used, are immaterial; the important thing is the offices and functions they discharge and still more the lessons they seek to enforce.

The three lodges we speak of as “three Grand Originals” stand for three Epochs into which we divide Old Testament history, and there is no reason why some Masons should not adopt as their third “Original” or pattern, typical of the prophetic dispensation, a different “Lodge” than that of Z., H., and J. Indeed, in Ireland, they make that king to be *Josiah*, who represents the old Monarchy of Judah, and not *Zerubbabel*, who symbolises the restoration of the House

of David. In either case, however, the "Grand Lodge" remains a *Royal* one, in which a King presides.

The Chapter being something symbolic, in the scene unfolded before us, the characters, the *dramatis personæ*, personate historical individuals, whose object is not merely to teach the dry facts of history but to illustrate the recovery of a great treasure, which is done *dramatically* the more forcibly to impress on our minds the providential character of the event.

And here we may note that in the two cases, that of the Irish and English Rituals, the initials of the Principals are practically the same, viz. I.H.S., which is itself a time-honoured formula: I. standing for *Joshua* and *Josiah*, since both in Greek and Hebrew the I represents our J; H. for *Haggai* and *Hilkiah*; S. for *Zerubbabel* and *Shaphan*. We give this for what it may be worth; we are not building on it. We believe that the original formula I.H.S. stood for these three, *Iao*, *Helios* ("the Sun"), and *Selene* ("the Moon").

Oliver finds fault with the Ritual because Ezra and Nehemiah have been included among

the Officers of the Chapter, seeing that they came to the Second Temple long after it had been rebuilt and consecrated; but the inclusion of the two men who recorded the history of that period in these tableaux is most appropriate. They were not the actual builders, but we nowhere speak of them as such, while the tableaux formed in the Chapter were simply symbolic and commemorative.

Moreover, it remains to be proved that there is here a discrepancy or any anachronism. For among those who returned from Babylon there were two men, both of whom are expressly mentioned, named *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*. (See *Nehemiah* vii. 7; xii. 1, 12, 33; *Ezra* ii. 2.) Oliver himself quotes a contemporary writer, Dean Prideaux, as having advocated their identity with our Officers. Be this as it may, it is most improbable that the original Ritual mentioned either *Ezra* or *Nehemiah*; we are of opinion that the R.A. Masons early in the eighteenth century had only a "Chief Scribe."

And yet there is good reason why we should mention "the Scribe" by the name of *Ezra*. The *Ezra* of history compiled all the more

important events of the years 520-516 B.C. by drawing from the *contemporary* authorities Haggai and Zechariah, thus enabling us to see the said events in their true perspective. A Jew, viz. Zerubbabel, had been made Governor of Judah, and he gave Judaism a spiritual rallying point by rebuilding the Temple. The pre-exilic prophets had been idealists, but he followed the post-exilic prophets who were thoroughly practical, setting forth the new theological presuppositions of Judaism, viz. a full monotheism and a desire to make Judaism the universal religion. Moreover, the new Temple was the starting-point of the Apocalyptic literature of the Jews. Joshua was now to be "the High Priest"; before there had only been a "Head" Priest. And the returning exiles were to combine with those Jews who had remained in Palestine and still remembered K.S.T. "in its former glory."

We hold the opinion that the legends connected with the various Degrees, which together form a connected "Secret Tradition," were the episodes rehearsed by the Kabbalists at their meetings for the instruction of their

disciples, and these in modern times have been cut up and redistributed, in doing which there has been some disarray.

Formerly, in opening a Chapter it was customary to put this question to the Officers: "Are you a R.A. Mason?" and he was to answer, "I am, that I am"; which is very suggestive. The next question was: "How shall I know you to be a R.A. Mason?" Answer: "By three times three"; this being an allusion to "the Triple Triangle" which was used as a badge of the Order, and also to the sign of three right feet and three left and three right hands. All this has been omitted in modern times.

We now open the Chapter by the invocation of a divine Trinity; that is, by three words beginning with the same letter, O.O.O. That has behind it the conception of a Deity, represented by our Sacred Word, which finds expression, again and again, by what we say and do. The three O.'s do not prevent our saying "*Almighty God.*"

The MS. Roll, No. 1, in the possession of the Grand Lodge of England, dated 25th December 1585, and believed to be, on account of its

literary style, a copy of an older original, begins with a solemn Invocation of a Trinity, which is really a Trinity of abstract ideas, and appears to have been the usual manner of commencing the proceedings in a Lodge: "The *Might* of the Father of Heaven and the *Wisdom* of His glorious Son, and the *Grace and Goodness* of the Holy Ghost, that be three persons and one God be with us at our beginning and give us grace so to govern us here in our living that we may come to His bliss that never shall have ending.—AMEN."

Here is practically an invocation of "*Strength, Wisdom, Beauty*," for the words "Grace and Goodness" mean *Benignity*, or "*Beauty of Character*"; and note that the characteristic of a Christian prayer *per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum* is absent. The form of Invocation in the MS. Roll, No. 2, is worded differently, for there we find: "The *Almighty* Father of Heaven, with the *Wisdom* of His Glorious Son, through the *Goodness* of the Holy Ghost, etc. "; but it is to the same effect.

This idea of a Trinity is symbolised in the Triple Tau which we shall see is an ancient symbol; and this symbol corresponds to the

Greater Triangle of Light which is said to represent the Sacred Word itself—that is, “the Omnific Word”; the term *Omnific* meaning “all-creating, all-powerful,” for we retain the idea of the Instituted Mysteries that there are “Words of Power.”

Naturally in Christian Lands and Lodges, the members of which are practically all Christians, there has always been a tendency to identify this characteristic feature of the Chapter with the Christian dogma of the Trinity. But we should bear in mind that there are other Trinities besides that of the Christian; there is, for instance, the Trimurti of the Hindus, there is the First Triad of Sephiroth which the Kabbalists spoke of, and there is the mysterious Trinity which the ancient Babylonians believed in and which we shall find is identical with J.B.O. The elucidation of this Name, as well as the Hebrew characters, A.B.L., will be dealt with in separate chapters.

We may gather what sort of men the original R.A. Companions were from the description which the Masons from Babylon give of themselves; as we have it now: “Brethren, of your

tribes and families . . . of the princely tribe of Judah ” ; or, as they used to put it in former times : “ We are of your own kindred, descended of most noble families of *Giblimites*, who wrought so hard at the building of the First Temple, etc.”

Every Installed Master will appreciate this statement, which points to the fact that only those who had gone through the Chair and could give a “convincing proof” of it were once eligible for the Royal Arch. The original Companions were men who had come “from Babylon,” possessing the lore of ancient Chaldea, but yet they were not “strangers,” nor unfaithful brethren, but genuine Jews.

In studying the Ritual we should note two points, very strongly emphasised therein :

First, the distinction drawn (in the Lecture delivered by Ex. Comp. H.) between “the forms, symbols, and ornaments of R.A. Masonry,” on the one hand, and “the rites and ceremonies at present in practice amongst us,” on the other.

Secondly, the fact that (although it is recognised that there have been changes in the rites and ceremonies) the compilers of the

Ritual claim to have preserved (in the Lecture delivered by Ex. Comp. Z) "the traditional ceremony to be used in sharing and communicating our secrets"—a statement which implies that the things that matter subsist, have not been disturbed, but are still being passed on from generation to generation.

The rites and ceremonies have undergone considerable change and may one day be subjected to further change; but our "forms, symbols, and ornaments" are fixed, remaining as an abiding witness to the great antiquity of the Royal Arch. And because this is so it would obviously be unwise to rely, or to put too much weight, on the text of our present working.

It must be regretted that the most picturesque feature of the old Ritual, viz. the Passing of the Veils, has fallen into disuse. We are told that it still persists in Bristol. In a Ritual printed by Reeves & Turner in 1870 the section is still retained, but the editors say in brackets ("*This ceremony is sometimes dispensed with*"). Naturally, when the Veils went, the three Grand Masters had to go with them, although in 1870 the three Sojourners

had already taken their places. Those Veils represented the three stages of initiation which a Mason went through, the last of which introduced him into the *Sanctum Sanctorum*.

The only thing left now to remind us of these Veils is the statement that "the Ribbon worn by the Companions is a sacred symbol denoting *Light*, being composed of the principal colours with which the Veils of the Temple and the Tabernacle were interwoven."

The thought underlying this statement is that the Companions belonged to an Institution—*Freemasonry*—which from ancient times had been referred to by the term *LUX*, "Light." It was on that account that the Masonic era was known as *Anno Lucis*. Mosheim, writing some 200 years ago, tells us that the Alchemists and Rosicrucians had a secret writing in which the sign $+$ stood for "Light"—that is to say, "the knowledge of their science"; and this was also a symbol of the four quarters of the globe, and of "the centre," which was determined by four angles of 90° converging on "a point within a circle" \oplus .

Accordingly, in the ceremonies the Candidate is said to be seeking participation in

“the Light of our Mysteries,” and when he is asked to wrench forth the k . . . e he is also to prepare “to receive the Light of the HOLY WORD.” Consistently with this the most important symbol we introduce him to is a symbol of Light. And immediately after that he is congratulated “on being admitted to the Light of our Order,” when he also is exhorted to “walk worthily in the Light that shines around.”

The Scale of Light was once considered to be of deep significance ; hence it is that the Rainbow was always a Masonic symbol. It was supposed to consist of seven colours, corresponding in number to the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences ; and if we allow three of these colours for the first Veil, and two more for the second Veil, there will remain two more for the third ; which agrees with the statement that the two we use in the Chapter are the “principal colours” in the Scale of Light. We now define these colours as “purple” and “crimson” ; they really are violet and red, both of them primary colours. *Light blue*, the emblem of Freemasonry in general, is the fifth in the Scale.

At present we still have the counterpart of the last Veil, viz. that which admitted to the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, in the covering of the Altar.

But let us see how the Light comes to the Companion; there are three stages:

(1) The Exalte has scarcely entered and been obl . . . d when he finds something. He holds that something in his grasp, but for want of light he cannot tell what it is. He can only by feeling it say what its shape is like and its probable use. The M.E.Z. points out to him the lesson of "this want of Light."

(2) Later he is called upon to explore a certain place, where, on account of the gloom, he cannot discern things, but he recovers a certain document and, bringing it to the light of day, he identifies it and is able to learn much from it. The success he has met with stimulates him to further exertions, and he renews his quest.

(3) At last the Sun has reached its highest altitude; its rays dart vertically into the scene of his labours, and then he not only sees but understands. He can now tell the shape of the P.; the material it is made of; the colour;

the script and symbols graven upon it; what he beheld when the Veil had been lifted; indeed, he has discovered the key to our Mysteries.

But note the gradation: first, groping in the dark, guided by *lumen naturæ*, which involves judging of things by the senses, by feeling; then, the knowledge of historic facts, the cultivation of science, the inspiration of art and the V.S.L.; lastly, the fullness of light, because the Sun is at its meridian, when the rays of heaven penetrate the deepest recesses of the heart.

In R.A. Masonry we acknowledge six lights: the three lesser represent "the *Light*, the Law, and the Prophets." And it is expressly asserted that "the Light" here is but another name for "the Patriarchal Dispensation," the earliest age in the world's history, the period which preceded the other two dispensations, the Law of Moses and the teaching of the Prophets, respectively. The three Dispensations correspond to the three Grand Lodges enumerated by the P. Sojourner at the time of the toasts, in answer to certain questions put by the M.E.Z.

Some "Light," indeed, was granted to primitive men, for there is "a light that lighteth every man coming into the world"; and this light, common to the whole human race, is independent both of the *Lex Scripta* and of the testimony of other men; indeed, it is because of this light that the testimony of Seers and Sages finds an echo in every honest heart.

In the Craft the Lesser Lights are supposed to represent three individual men, the Principal Officers, rather than three Dispensations; but such camouflage is characteristic of the Craft because, confessedly, there we are dealing largely with substituted secrets, and things are not always what they seem.

Again, in the Craft the Greater Lights are said to be the V.S.L., the S., and C.'s. But now in the Chapter we find that these symbols have a deeper meaning. "The B. denotes the *Wisdom* of K.S., the S. the *Strength* of K.H., and the C.'s the exquisite skill and workmanship of the H., the W.'s Son"—that is, *Beauty*. So, here, the Greater Lights of a Lodge are correlated to those three mysterious "Pillars" by which not only the Ideal Lodge, but the entire Universe, are supported.

The Candidate is, therefore, warned by Ex. Comp. H. that this triple symbol goes much further than he thought as a Craft Mason, saying: "But the truly Speculative Mason ever regards them as the unerring standard of the Wisdom, Truth, and Justice of the M.H." His *Wisdom* is amply exemplified in the V.S.L.; his Truth is justly depicted in the S., which is the acknowledged symbol of *Strength* and the criterion of perfection; and his Justice is elucidated by the C.'s, which (*in view of the exquisite skill and workmanship of H.A.*) suggest *Beauty* of form, symmetry, and character. The modern compilers have mixed up things here, perhaps they have got out of their depth, but the old idealism of the Kabbalists is still discernible.

It is because of the constant thought of the Triune Essence, that when Ex. Comp. J. outlines the rise and progress of R.A. Masonry, he shows how the number *three* has projected itself over the whole history and organisation of the Royal Arch. Thus there have been "three Grand Originals," three historic Grand Lodges, each with three Grand Masters; and

so three distinct Epochs. Likewise there are three Principals in every Chapter, three Chairs that we must pass through, three arch-stones that have to be wrenched forth, three Sojourners, three Triangles, three Taus, three lesser lights and three greater ones, three M.M. from B., three Points where every Companion must halt and b . . . , three words, J.B.O., three letters, A.B.L., and in the old Ceremonial three Arches and three Veils. At one time the Badge of the R.A. Mason was described as a "Triple Triangle," which it certainly is; and the rope around the P.S. was wound three times.

The Trinity of the Royal Arch has its parallel in Craft Masonry in "the three Grand Masters" who presided at the building of K.S.T. For those G.M.'s were not mere individuals but personifications of abstract ideas, as is shown by the names they bear—*Wisdom, Strength, Beauty*; they really are the same that presided at the creation of the Universe, and so they are the same three Beings invoked at the beginning of our Ceremonies, O.O.O.—"One who can do everything" (*Strength*); "One who knows everything"

(*Wisdom*); "One who adorns the whole creation with His presence" (*Beauty*).

The way the Candidate has to travel to the place where the Obl . . . is taken is very significant. Here, in a way, he obtains "that blessing," but only in a physical sense; after that, if he wants to participate in our Mysteries, he will still have to travel, going from W. to E. And it is remarkable that in doing so he performs a certain action with his body—"halting and b . . ."—which indicates the progress made. It is on arriving at his destination that he is admitted to a full participation of our secrets, which in practice means a complete illumination.

In so advancing, at certain intervals, he acknowledges the additions he is making to his mystic knowledge by his halting and b . . .; but the fact that most weighs with him, and that sustains his spirit, is that all the time he is getting nearer and nearer to the S. and M. Name of T.T.A.L.G.M.H.

The application of the numbers 3, 5, 7 in the Chapter speaks volumes. Those intervals are stages in the journey he is on, indicative of the experiences gone through, and this is

to show him that the Royal Arch presupposes all that precedes it in the Craft, which we regard as only introductory to the higher knowledge he now acquires.

The place where we are obl . . . d is described as a "Sacred Shrine." When we were mere Initiates they spoke to us of a "Pedestal"; as F.C.'s and M.M.'s we were asked to advance to the E.; but we were not given any reason why we should take that direction, nor indeed were we ever told what we should find in the E. Now, however, having reached that quarter (though in the Ritual that point of the compass is only named in the Rubrics) we see things that make us realise that it is really a Shrine we have come to.

This Shrine represents one which was discovered by our Ancient Brethren in the bosom of the Holy Mt. M . . . which is said to have been situated in a central position. That central position was to be determined by reference to something on the surface; that is, by the Holiest Chamber—the most sacred part—in the magnificent structure erected by K.S. And here, in our Shrine, we discover a Sacred Name, which points to the

words by which the construction of that historic structure was announced long ago; "He (*K.S.*) shall build a House for my Name."

What precisely are we to understand by the title of the Supreme Degree? This question is definitely settled by the words of the *M.E.Z.* in the Mystical Lecture, when he says of certain things that they could not be found "until they were discovered in the Royal Arch," for he goes on to say, "In the centre of the Vault stood a block of. . . ." It is evident, therefore, that "the Royal Arch" means the Vaulted Chamber.

We have been visiting a subterranean place, but we come up again to the surface, and when we descend a second time we have the good fortune of finding that the Sun is at its meridian and that it makes everything clear to us. This expresses our growth in knowledge.

Gradually, in passing through the several Chairs, we shall learn about the stages by which the Hebrew people attained to the knowledge of God; for as we take the place of *J.*, *H.*, and *Z.*, the Hebrew words into which the Babylonian *J.B.O.* have been commuted

are designed to teach us how the idea of God was developed; He became successively:

- (a) A local or tribal Deity.
- (b) A God of Gods, more powerful than any other.
- (c) T.T.A.L.G.M.H.; that is to say, the only God.

This part of the Ritual will be further elaborated.

In all this we may find a justification for the statements that R.A. Masonry is "founded on the Name of God"; that it has "the Glory of God for its object"; and that it "inspires its members with the most exalted ideas of God." It is because this Supreme Degree rests on the Name, Nature, and Attributes of God, that "in every part, point, and letter of its ineffable Mysteries" we also proclaim "the eternal welfare of man" as an object worthy of constant pursuit.

CHAPTER II

A QUESTION OF MEN AND DATES

WE do not propose to write a Book of Wonders; we shall not deal here with the marvellous analogies which are to be found between Freemasonry and the ancient religions of the world. Instead, we shall endeavour to give the authentic history of Freemasonry and to vindicate the claim to antiquity which we make. Nor shall we discuss minor changes or the occurrences of the last hundred years, but will confine ourselves to the task of unravelling Masonic origins.

Our *Book of Constitutions* has officially recognised the Royal Arch in the following terms:

“By the solemn Act of Union between the two Grand Lodges of Free-Masons of England in December 1813, it was declared and pronounced that pure Antient Masonry consists of three Degrees and no more, viz. those

of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch."

This endorses the view that the Royal Arch is not a Fourth Degree, but is part and parcel of the Third. To the Candidate we say: "You may, perhaps, conceive that you have this day received a Fourth Degree in Freemasonry; *such, however, is not the case.*" It is sometimes described as "a Degree," but in that case the word is used loosely and somewhat informally. Indeed, even in the Ritual do we not speak of "this supreme Degree"?

Nor does our disavowal involve the idea that "the Order of the Holy Royal Arch" has been carved out of the M.M.'s Degree, and that the latter has been dismembered and mutilated. But it certainly implies that the said "Order" was once part and parcel of the M.M.'s Degree, and was afterwards separated from it, as the two halves of some nuts may be separated without violence. We cannot assign any date to this segregation, but when the Royal Arch first comes into public notice we find that the Degree was only conferred

on Installed Masters, and was regarded as the coping-stone of the Masonic Structure.

Evidently, while the Royal Arch was an integral part of the Third Degree, it was kept separate and distinct as "an Order" within the Third Degree. Only those who had presided over a Lodge were eligible for the honour. The evidence for this is decisive and unassailable, going back nearly 200 years. It is on this account that even now the Royal Arch is described as the "completion " of the M.M.'s Degree. The nature of this Degree required that only Masons of ripe experience, who had proved worthy in all the stages of "the Craft," could be allowed to occupy "the Chair of K.S." and the Throne of King Z.

The "Modern" Grand Lodge of London did not always look favourably on the Royal Arch. On the contrary, at one time it repudiated it. In 1758 its Grand Secretary wrote: "Our Society is neither Arch, Royal Arch, nor Antient"; the term "*Antient*" in this case meaning, of course, not that they did not claim antiquity, but that they had no connection with "the Antients," the rival Grand Lodge.

Later still, in 1792, the Modern Grand Lodge resolved that it "has nothing to do with the proceedings of the Society of Royal Arch Masons." It was really under the pressure of the Antients, and of many "Moderns" who had joined the Royal Arch, that recognition was at last granted, and that the Supreme Degree came into its own, being henceforth acknowledged by all as "the essence of Freemasonry."

Our description of it as "the Holy Royal Arch Chapter of Jerusalem" amounts to a confession that it is of Jewish origin and that originally it was worked by Jews, which agrees with these three familiar facts:

- (a) That all the biblical passages read therein are from the Old Testament, the Bible of the Jews.
- (b) That it follows a non-Christian system of chronology, that of *Anno Lucis*.
- (c) That the Companions are presumed to be people "of the princely tribe of Judah," not Gentiles.

The Ritual used to-day is substantially the same as the one which was deposited with

Grand Lodge, and approved by the Grand Chapter, a little over one hundred years ago. It is a condensation of an earlier one, of a more elaborate character, with some things left out and other things put in.

Companion Stokes, in a recent publication, does not hesitate to say: "In its present form the English Royal Arch Degree is too incongruous to be of any great antiquity. It exhibits too many evidences of modern construction." This judgment is to be found almost word for word in Oliver's book on the Royal Arch, published in 1846; but Oliver was exalted under the same Ritual as we have to-day.

Companion Stokes also says: "Dunckerley is traditionally credited with the composition of the Lectures, but this is doubtful"; then he adds: "*It appears very likely*" that Dermott put the R.A. Ritual into something like its present shape. After he has made these statements, however, he feels constrained to make the following confession: "Some authorities think that there is as little evidence in favour of Dermott's influence as of Dunckerley's." What, then, can be the value of the phrase

"It appears very likely," if this is flatly denied, and even opposed, by "some authorities"?

The present Ritual is marred both by its omissions and its amplifications. It is indeed strange that whereas originally the Ceremonies of the Royal Arch were the culminating point of Freemasonry, the Ritual we now use borrows from that of the Craft, or at least adopts its wording, and frequently there is a good deal of padding, as if its compilers had found themselves short of matter. But it is as clear as noonday that, although the anonymous would-be reformers have garbled and distorted our manual, the substance of the Degree remains unaffected and is something extremely ancient.

Gould, the well-known historian, has hazarded the opinion that "the Degrees of Installed Master and Royal Arch had their inception in the Scots Degrees, which sprang up in all parts of France about 1740." He brushes aside a great deal of what Oliver wrote on the subject, for Colonel Stone had been advocating the French origin of the Royal Arch; but Oliver opposed his views, and said that Stone's information "was very

imperfect," and that "there is no evidence to prove that the English Royal Arch was ever worked in France."

What are we to believe then? Evidently the Doctors disagree. Companion Stokes, in his work on "Royal Arch Masonry," although he practically adopts Gould's opinion, writes: "*Gould's evidence for this is not conclusive.*"

Now, let us consider some facts pertinent to this question of the origin of the Royal Arch. There is a record that in 1743 a ceremonial procession was held at Youghal, Ireland, and a Dublin newspaper describes the emblems carried on that occasion thus: "Fourthly, the Royal Arch carried by two excellent Masons." Companion Stokes does not think that what those "Excellent Masons" carried was a banner; he says that it may have been a small "Ark of the Covenant" which was "frequently included in Lodge regalia." He should have remembered that "the Ark of the Covenant" used to be a very important ornament of the Chapter, and that the Ceremonies centred in that Ark of the Covenant. Anyhow, it is clear that the Royal Arch existed in 1743 and that

the Companions bore the title of "Excellent Masons."

Nor was the Youghal Chapter the only Chapter in Ireland. We know that Dermott became a R.A. Mason in Dublin in 1746. Nor have we any reason to assume that the Chapter where he was exalted was of recent creation. Ten years later, in 1756, in his book, *Ahiman Rezon*, he wrote: "This I firmly believe to be the root, heart, and marrow of Masonry," stating also that the Royal Arch was practised in England "by the Excellent Masons of the Grand Lodge of England according to the old Constitutions, who . . . carefully collected and revised the regulations which have been *long in use*, etc." This refers, of course, to the Antient Grand Lodge, not to that of London. Such statements must be regarded as made in all good faith, and it is inconceivable that Dermott would have so spoken if he had suspected that the Royal Arch was a novelty of mushroom growth. His rivals would have been pleased to find some discrepancy in what he said, especially as they observed that some "Moderns" were being drawn into the Chapter.

In a book published in Dublin in 1744, under the title of *A Serious and Impartial Inquiry*, the author, Dr Fifield Dassigny, mentions that "some years ago," that is, some years before 1744, an impostor came to Dublin who pretended to be a "Master of the Royal Arch," and professed to teach a spurious form of that Degree "which he asserted he had brought with him from the City of York." His imposture lasted only a few months, for the impostor was unmasked and "excluded from all benefits in the Craft." This shows that *some years before* 1744 the Royal Arch was already functioning, and that the Companions of that period were more scrupulous and vigilant than we give them credit for in maintaining their form of Masonry "pure and undefiled."

Dassigny says incidentally, that is, without intending to prove anything, that it was a Brother from York who committed this fraud; but he was exposed by "a Brother of probity and wisdom" who some time before had "attained that excellent part of Masonry in London." There was an attempt to hush the scandal, but it could not be done, and in con-

sequence some of the Dublin Brethren, who now discovered the existence of the Royal Arch Degree, resented that it should be withheld from them, "since they had already passed through the usual Degrees of probation." We must thank Brother Dassigny for this description of Craft Masonry as so many "Degrees of probation," for it throws a flood of light on the relation of the Royal Arch to the Craft.

It is evident, then, that "some years" before 1744 the Royal Arch existed in several places, that some time before that a Brother had been exalted in London, and that only men who had gone through the Craft—through "the Degrees of Probation"—were admitted.

Dassigny says that the Brethren who complained of being kept out of the said Degree had no real grievance, for in order to be admitted into it they must make proper application and be "received with due formality." They must have passed the Chair in a Lodge and given proof of their skill in architecture.

Evidently there was no undue haste in getting anyone to join this Degree, which clearly required more than ordinary intelligence and

was acknowledged to be "at once the foundation and keystone of Freemasonry."

And, of course, if the lower Degrees, being merely "Degrees of probation," were secret, the Royal Arch and whatever was imparted therein must have been doubly secret.

Dassigny's statements are certainly worth pondering. First, he defines the Order as "an organised body of men who have passed the Chair and given undeniable proof of their skill in architecture; it cannot be treated with too much reverence." And again: "there cannot be the least hinge to hang a doubt on, but that they are most excellent Masons."

Nor can we dismiss such witnesses as these by saying: "Dassigny had not a very good reputation"; or "He was not a trustworthy writer." Companion Stokes has raised both these objections, but afterwards says: "His statements cannot be ignored." Indeed, Companion Stokes often wobbles in his judgments, and surely there is no sense in gainsaying the facts reported in 1744. Too often, alas! we are inclined to adopt the old lawyer's maxim: "No case; abuse the other side."

We have it on the authority of the Secretary of the Grand Chapter of Scotland that the Stirling Rock Royal Arch Chapter met as early as 30th July 1743; how long it had existed by then we are not told. The by-laws of this early Scotch Chapter, dated 14th May 1745, tell us what the fee was for "*Exalting Excellent or Super-Excellent*," by which we see that the Companions of that time used the phraseology which still obtains now. In Ireland, too, the same expressions were used. "Exalting" implies that the Candidate had conferred on him something more than what the Craft Masons knew of, as we might have supposed if he was already a P.M.

But where do our Masonic scholars think that the Royal Arch originated? Findel asserts that it was in France, having sprung from the "Scots" Degrees about 1740; but Companion Stokes, while not denying it, remarks: "*Findel has no real authority for this statement.*" And after making this admission he expresses the view that "the general consensus of opinion is that the Degree originated in France, as Gould states,

but it is not probable that it was due to French Masons. It must be borne in mind that the French Degrees were philosophical rather than historical."

This is very interesting, for it means that a majority of writers have adopted Gould's view; and suspecting that the Degree originated outside England they have fixed on France as the probable country, although Companion Stokes himself cannot conceive its originating with native Masons, because, although the French fabricated many Degrees, their Degrees were not historical but philosophical. This lands us in a quandary, for we are now faced with the riddle: Is the Royal Arch an historical or a philosophical Degree? We should not like to say that it is either the one or the other, for the simple reason that it seems to partake of both characters.

Now, the suspicions of many writers centre on Chevalier Ramsay, whom they consider the inventor of the Royal Arch. But Gould scouts this theory as having no foundation whatever. Ramsay himself seems to have been a strong believer in the French *Royale*

Arche as the *non plus ultra* of Masonry; but, alas! for Gould and others, he has nothing to say in support of the Modern theory that our Supreme Degree originated in France; he simply does not know whence it has come, although if anyone could have thrown any light on the problem it was Ramsay. In 1737 he made a speech before a general assembly of Masons in Paris, in which he attributed the origin of Freemasonry to the Crusaders.

So, then, we are confronted with the fact that about 1740 the Royal Arch was already an international Institution; it existed in Scotland, in France, in Ireland; while here in England it appears in York and in London; it worked secretly and unobtrusively and, as far as we can gather, it was firmly established. Nobody at the time could tell when or how it had come into existence, and apparently they all viewed it as a close corporation.

There was no attempt to justify its extreme secrecy or to explain its rise; it was regarded as an ancient and well-accredited Society. The idea that it was something of recent creation would have been scouted as absurd,

and, of course, we know that the propagation of such things demands time, unless we are to suppose that they have come by some sort of "spontaneous generation," simultaneously, in various countries.

One fact is beyond controversy, viz. that in 1740 the Royal Arch was functioning with regularity and with considerable prestige in widely separated centres, as witness Ramsay, Dassigny, and others. The development of such a Degree and its spread to different countries implies a long and unquestioned existence; anyhow, we can all see that this could not have been effected in either one year nor in fifty years. The Royal Arch could not have sprung like the proverbial mushroom in one night.

Oliver, in his book *Origin of the Royal Arch*, held the view, which nobody else seems to have followed, that this system of Masonry was "originated by the Brethren who seceded from the constitutional Grand Lodge in 1739." We regard this as utterly nonsensical. Seceders do not fabricate; they do not recklessly put themselves in the wrong by making arbitrary innovations, although the ground

for seceding might, of course, have been that the old body had been unfaithful by failing to uphold some principle which they were resolved to vindicate.

But we may see how unreasonable Oliver was by the remark he makes that Dermott (whom he regards as the chief culprit) intended "that the Royal Arch should be received amongst the Brethren as a foreign Degree." How on earth could he do that when he himself was exalted in Ireland in 1746?

The essential parts of the R.A. Ritual cannot be fastened on any man because they are traditional, derived from antiquity. It has been said that the Ritual was a concoction made from several Degrees, viz. the Order of the East, the Knight of the Sword and of the East, the Knights of the Ninth Arch, the *Rite Ancien de Buillon*, etc. etc. This, again, is quite absurd, because one has to assume that all those forgeries are older than the Royal Arch, which is ridiculous.

Perhaps we might describe the Royal Arch as a group of Three Degrees, which could be conveniently called the "Excellent," "Super Excellent," and "Most Excellent" Degrees.

There actually were Degrees with such titles a hundred years ago, and they are said to be indistinguishable from the Royal Arch. A Royal Arch Certificate issued in 24th May 1824 by the Union Lodge No. 119, Boston, U.S.A., recommended a R.A. Companion "To all the Most Excellent Brethren, Royal Arch, and Super-excellent Masons round the Globe, etc." There is reason to suspect that at a time when the Degrees were being multiplied an effort was made to cut up the Royal Arch in three, but it did not succeed. In the real R.A. Degree, however, the Three Principals have always been viewed as forming together "the Master" of the Chapter, for they act conjointly and they are inseparable.

It is nevertheless a fact that the Royal Arch has its roots in many Degrees, but this is because they all have borrowed some of their plumes from it.

Hughan points out how absurd it is to suppose (as some writers do) that the Royal Arch Degree was fabricated by the Antients as a body or that they were responsible for its introduction into this country because of two facts:

First, that there are records proving that the Degree was patronised in different parts of England by the "Modern Masons" as much as it was by the "Antients."

Secondly, that Dermott himself was exalted in Dublin in 1746; that is, five years before the formation of the rival Grand Lodge.

As against this some might argue that from the first the Antients regarded the Royal Arch as an integral part of Masonry, and hence all along they did their best to promote it; but at the time of the Union their conduct was universally admitted to have been quite correct; so much so that the United Grand Lodge of England proclaimed the fact that the Royal Arch is part and parcel of "pure antient Masonry" and the complement of the Third Degree.

Dermott has been represented as an innovator, capable of almost any crime to forward his ends. But let us remember that at one time there was much antagonism and bitterness between the Moderns and the Antients, and that the two parties bandied accusations against each other which had no foundation in fact. We hold that Dermott was a sincere

man; in defining "pure Antient Masonry" he drew the line at the Royal Arch, as our present Book of Constitutions does; and he stuck to that point staunchly. The whole body of the Antients, and some of the Moderns, were equally firm in that conviction, regarding that Degree as the essence of Freemasonry. It was the *Ne plus ultra*, hence the description "this Supreme Degree" given of it in our Ritual.

It is common knowledge that the Grand Lodge of London, eager to establish itself in the country, was at one time "coquetting" with the various Degrees that had sprung up in all directions. And during that critical period it was the conservatism of Dermott that saved Freemasonry from stultifying itself in the eyes of the world by adopting silly novelties, whether of home or foreign growth.

After the Union we find Oliver and many others taking the same stand in this matter. In 1829 Oliver was sounding this warning: "All Degrees beyond the Royal Arch ought to be carefully separated from genuine Masonry, as they are mostly founded on vague and uncertain traditions which possess not a

shadow of authority to recommend them to our notice." The man who thus wrote had gone through practically the whole gamut of the recognised Degrees, and therefore he knew what he was talking about.

These facts compel us to conclude that at the beginning of the eighteenth century the Royal Arch was firmly established both here and abroad. Before that it is not mentioned anywhere by that name; but what can we infer from this? We suspect that it had some other name, and hope to prove that it was identical with the *Harodim Degree*.

CHAPTER III

SPECULATIVE FREEMASONRY

FREEMASONRY is a "speculative science," and has this in common with the Royal Arch, that no one can tell us how or whence it originated.

The men in high places are not always accurate when they write about the origin of Freemasonry. For instance, Bro. Dr Hammond, notwithstanding having been Grand Librarian for many years, has put in writing that, "Of the Gentlemen or Speculatives who joined the Freemasons the first we hear of was Ashmole." This makes his reviewer in the Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge ask:

"Does he seriously suggest that John Boswell, the Laird of Auchinleck, Viscount Canada, Sir Alexander Strachan, General Hamilton, and the Rt. Hon. Mr Robert Moray, General Quartermaster of the Armie of Scotland, were all Operative Masons? If

not, he must admit that we hear of Speculatives before Ashmole."

Bro. Henry Sadler, who, like Dr Hammond, was Librarian of Grand Lodge, has a more accurate account of this particular matter, for in his "Masonic Reprints" he gives entries in the old records as far back as 1620, proving the existence of Speculative Freemasonry at that date in England. And let us remember that this Freemasonry was not by any means, even at that date, a new invention!

We are informed by an Irish Brother (*A.Q.C.*, xxvi. p. 137) that "Recent researches among the Manuscripts of Trinity College have shown that Freemasonry of the Speculative type was known within the precincts of Dublin University before the Revolution of 1688." It would be interesting to find how it penetrated into that seat of learning! It is clear, however, that it was not due to Elias Ashmole, and that it had nothing to do with the erection of any building by Operative Masons.

This *Speculative Freemasonry* has to be distinguished from the Operative Building Art; for though our "Science" enjoyed the patronage of the men who covered the land with

stately and superb edifices, not all the Operative Masons were "Speculative Freemasons," as the term is now understood, and conversely not all who were Freemasons in this sense were Operative Masons.

Of the early history of Freemasonry very little is known; but this is not surprising. Freemasons have always kept their secrets to themselves, putting nothing in writing. Hence it is that, although it has been in existence for hundreds of years, the world cannot find out anything as to its inner working, and we ourselves have no documentary proofs as to its activities, except for a few scrappy references here or there and the internal evidence of the various Rituals.

Perhaps some of the questions which stir up controversy amongst us might be made plain if certain Officers of Grand Lodge had not in 1720, through rash and mistaken zeal, destroyed many ancient records. Long ago *Archæologia* published a paper by Ware, in which he told the world how Nicholas Stone deliberately destroyed many valuable papers belonging to the Society of Freemasons; and be believed that this was done with the con-

currence and approval of his Master, Inigo Jones, who probably regarded those Gothic or Old English records as antique and useless, and, like the Calif Omar, thought that "whatever was agreeable to the new faith was superfluous and what was not ought to be destroyed." Nicholas Stone and Inigo Jones were Master and Warden respectively in a Lodge in which the Operative Masons predominated.

Here we may quote a most illuminating statement by Bro. S. T. Klein (*A.Q.C.*, xxv. 103): "Three or four centuries later we see a general decadence of the Arts, persecution and suppression of religious houses, the knowledge of geometry becoming looked upon as pagan learning and classed with witchcraft and magic, masonry completely neglected, and the very name of Gothic being given to that beautiful style because it was called *barbarous* in comparison with the craze for the antique styles which had become the fashion."

The old Gothic builders had been staunch upholders of the Speculatives; but a revolution in architecture having taken place before the dawn of the seventeenth century the

exponents of the new style were not always just to their predecessors. The old Building Guilds had now degenerated into something like social clubs, and that was the way Freemasonry seemed inclined to go. Inigo Jones, the leading spirit of his time, remodelled and modernised the Lodges in that sense; he helped to secularise the Craft.

The *Inigo Jones MS.*, dating from about 1607, lends colour to this, for "it differs from all known transcripts in many points and agrees with no one copy extant." Gould is of opinion that it "formed the basis of Dr Anderson's Constitutions."

In Scotland, in a Charter granted by the Masons to William St Clair of Roslin, about 1600, there is a complaint of "many false corruptions and imperfections in the Craft"; which is repeated in the Confirmation of the Charter in 1630. Some critics may tell us that this refers to the changes in architectural style, but it also points to the crisis that had set in among the old Masons and their Guilds, for we know that they were the patrons of Speculative Freemasonry.

When Dr Stukeley was initiated in 1721 he

says: "I was the first person made a Freemason for many years. We had great difficulty to find members enough to perform the ceremony. Immediately after that it took a run, and ran itself out of breath through the folly of its members."

This statement is most telling and worthy of consideration. It shows that there were Masons and Masons; that while some people were initiated anyhow and were disposed to *cheapen* Freemasonry there were some who were extremely particular. Stukeley's Masonic friends would have kept the Fraternity very select.

Evidently he does not view the expansion that followed after his Initiation as an unmixed blessing; rather it was a symptom of degeneracy, for it brought a lowering of the standard. Anyhow, he pronounces the rapid spread of Freemasonry that took place—a foolish thing. We are told that a certain number of old Masons were required to perform the ceremony, and perhaps those men had to hold a certain rank. Stukeley's words are: "We had a great difficulty to find *members enough*, etc." Dr Plot, in 1686, calls these essential men

“Antients of the Order,” and in the Beaumont MS. they are called *Seniores*; that is, “Elders,” which conveys the same idea. According to Dr Plot there must be “five or six,” which was discussed in *The Apocalypse of Freemasonry*. He probably meant a F.C. Lodge; that is, “five or more.” In Ashmole’s Initiation “seven” are mentioned—the number of a “perfect Lodge.” We have no doubt, therefore, that Stukeley was “regularly” initiated.

Now when we first hear about the Royal Arch we find that it stands in some sort of relation to Freemasonry; for it is in connection with a Masonic procession at Youghal, in Ireland.

No one pretends that Anderson was a R.A. Companion; the name was not yet in use, though the thing itself existed; but Anderson, like the Grand Lodge of London, confined his efforts to revive Craft Masonry, deliberately neglecting all else. The Masonry of London was a popular movement, somewhat volatile, claiming a great heritage, but minimising the serious part of it, and so calculated to attract the *bon vivants* of the period. They made much of “the Degrees of probation”; while

the essential thing, that which the probationers should have as their reward at the end, was omitted altogether.

What Anderson wrote in his *Book of Constitutions* in 1723 suggests that he knew of the existence of the Royal Arch as a Supreme Degree, the culminating point of Ancient Masonry; for in that book he employs terms which seem to be a reference to an Arch, which somehow had to do with a King, for he remarks: "Lodges . . . wherein . . . the *Royal Art* is cultivated . . . the whole body resembles a well-built *Arch*."

On the republication of that book some years later the passage was expanded so as to read like this: "The Brothers of the *Royal Art* . . . in many Lodges wherein . . . the science and Art are duly cultivated . . . the whole body resembles a well-built Arch of the beautiful Augustan style."

Now, why should he persist in speaking of Masonry as something *Royal*, and in comparing it to an *Arch*, if there was no reality behind those terms? The Masons who "duly cultivated" their Speculative Science could only be described as "Brothers of the *Royal Art*,"

because there was a King in it and because of the Vaulted Shrine with its arch-stones.

Anderson had found a thing or two and was practising reservation, perhaps because he saw the indifference and apathy of the Grand Lodge of London towards R.A. Masonry; although the better instructed Masons knew that the Craft Degrees had been devised as so many preparatory Degrees, as a means of testing the fitness or otherwise of a man for the Mysteries of the Royal Arch.

Bro. Hextall, at a meeting of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge (xxx. p. 211), expressed his conviction that "the substance of the (*Royal Arch*) Degree was known prior to these dates," viz. the dates in dispute, 1738 and 1734, and he quotes with approval the words of Bro. Chetwode Crawley: "We can never expect to find such (*separate*) mention of the Royal Arch Degree, because it is not a separate entity, but the completing part of a Masonic legend, a constituent ever present in the compound body, even before it developed into a Degree."

This agrees with a statement made by Oliver, that originally the M.M.'s Degree "included

. . . the germs of our present Royal Arch ”; although we regard this as an understatement.

At the above-mentioned meeting Bro. Songhurst made these interesting remarks: “References to *Master Lodges* have been found as early as 1733. These appear generally to have been attached to regular warranted Lodges, and in most cases they are noted as holding their meetings on Sundays. It is nowhere definitely stated what work was then transacted, though it is generally assumed to have been something that was then called the Degree of a Master Mason. I do not think that it is safe to conclude that this was necessarily the Third Degree as we know it now; and, in fact, as all Lodges were then empowered by resolution of Grand Lodge to ‘make Masters at their discretion,’ it appears to me that these *Masters’ Lodges* must have existed for something entirely different.”

Evidently this Degree is a mystery; and, as we cannot argue about the things we do not know, we must suspend judgment. But it is clear that in 1733 there were Lodges of a peculiar character, all the members of which were “Masters,” which met for other purposes

than those of a Craft Lodge, or the M.M.'s Degree as we know it; and the silence that there is about it suggests that this Degree was of a more secret nature than the Craft. We might leave it at that, but Bro. Songhurst will not do so, for he goes on to make a suggestion which rouses the keenest interest:

“Very few Minutes of these early *Masters' Lodges* are known to exist. They were generally kept quite distinct from those of the ordinary Lodge—a practice which was apparently followed at a later day with the Royal Arch when we know definitely that it was worked under the implied authority of the Craft Warrant.”

We have only one observation to make: as these Lodges met on Sunday one would think that the members would not have felt justified in assembling on that day unless the Degree were of a religious character, consonant with the Sabbatarian ideas of the age. And if that Degree was “founded on the Name of God” it would have gone a long way towards removing any possible objection for meeting on Sunday. The Jewish Masons who in 1658 held a meeting in Rhode Island to confer the

Degrees of Masonry are also stated to have done so after a service in the Synagogue. Dassigny said about the Royal Arch: "It cannot be treated with too much reverence."

In 1746 the Lodge of Swalwell undertook to regulate the admission of Brethren to the status of *Harodim*; and we naturally ask what this status was? It had nothing to do with "The Grand Chapter of the Ancient and Venerable Order of Harodim," founded by William Preston in 1784, which, despite the high-sounding title, was only a glorified Lodge of Instruction wherein he delivered his Lectures. But Preston adopted the name *Harodim* because it was really "ancient and venerable," which Masons had been using from time immemorial for their "Rulers." He intended to bring together the Rulers of Lodges; that is, the Installed Masters, that they might help him to popularise his Lectures, as an exposition of Masonry.

The first time that the name *Harodim* appears on record is in connection with the Lodge just mentioned. It takes the form of *Higrodiem*, the distorted form bearing witness to its antiquity. In 1690 a Lodge

was established at Winlaton which was called "The Highrodiam Lodge." In 1725 it removed to Swalwell; and ten years after, in 1735, it came under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of London, and is now represented on the List of Lodges by the "Lodge of Industry," No. 48, Gateshead, which is a lineal descendant of it. This fact attests the genuineness of the original Lodge, and it is interesting to see that in 1746 this Lodge had a Degree or an Order, or "Status," that was referred to by the name of "*Harodim*."

It is also with reference to this Lodge that Yarker said (in the eighteenth century) that there were two Master Grades, viz. the *Highrodiam* and the *English Master*. Probably the latter was the same as what we now understand by "Installed Master." This *Highrodiam* Degree could only be conferred in a "Grand Lodge," which implies that it was something in advance of the status of Master of an ordinary Lodge. Whatever it was, the London "Grand Lodge" does not seem to have opposed it in 1746, presumably because it had been practised "from time immemorial," as the phrase went in those

days; nevertheless, it was allowed to fall into disuse.

Bro. Joseph Laycock, who became Provincial Grand Master for Durham in 1735, has left us an oration which he delivered that same year at that historic Lodge; and in the said oration he quoted some verses about the symbolic meaning of the Sword and Trowel as used by the Jews. These verses, Yarker says, "are found *verbatim* in the Ritual of *Harodim* Rosy Cross," by which he means "The Royal Order of Scotland." Here we seem to burn, because "the Sword and Trowel were adopted by R.A. Masons," and the title of the said Degree suggests "the Order of the (Holy) Royal Arch of Scotland." May it not, therefore, be a reference to the Scotch Order of the Royal Arch? It is just the sort of transition to the modern title we should have expected; our suspicion is supported by other facts.

Of course, the Sword and Trowel might be adopted in any Degree; but they have always been used in the Royal Arch. We have a statement that the Royal Order of Scotland was divided into two parts, the first of which

was called "The Passing of the Bridge." Yarker says that this ceremony included the main features of the Royal Arch. We think, therefore, that the *Bridge* was an Arch, an Arched passage, or Vault. And very naturally we connect the word with the mention by a contributor in *The Freemasons' Magazine*, in 1790, of "an ancient Degree" called "The Passing of the Bridge."

We should also recollect that Bro. Laycock was Grand Master of a Province where the *Highrodiam*, or *Harodim*, Degree had been worked from time immemorial.

From all these facts, therefore, we infer that when Bro. Laycock spoke of the Sword and Trowel as used symbolically by the Jews he was referring to the emblems with which some of the Masters then present at the Grand Lodge were already familiar; they were Members of the Harodim Degree in which they were used, and would appreciate the reference.

At that time, when new Degrees were being carved out from the older and more accredited ones, some of the leading features of the latter were incorporated in the former, and it was

thus that the ideas of a "Royal Arch" and "of the Passing of the Veils," or "of the Arches," gave rise to forms of expression which now sound strange in our ears, such as that of *Passing the Bridge*. Perhaps we should regard the word *Bridge* as a good way of concealing what the Companions had in mind.

We should here recall the Masonic tradition about "the Heredom of Kilwinning." On the reorganisation of Scotch Freemasonry in 1598-9 the Kilwinning Lodge was confirmed in its status of an ancient "Head Lodge," ranking as only second to that of Edinburgh. But what are we to think of the name "Heredom," as used in the traditions of this historic Lodge? Our Rose Croix Brethren have idealised it as meaning a "Mount of Initiation," and they connect it historically with Kilwinning, as if the Mount of Initiation was there.

From this we can see that the connection between *Heredom* and *Kilwinning* is far older than Chevalier Ramsay. As a matter of fact, Ramsay's connection with Freemasonry cannot be traced further back than 1734, when he was attracted by the new Lodges in Paris;

and the connection comes to an end four or five years later, on realising that Freemasonry had become an illegal Society in France, the land of his adoption. Therefore, we must admit that his influence in the development of the Craft has been grossly exaggerated.

Really and truly all these names, *Highrodiam*, *Harodim*, and *Heredom*, are one and the same, the divergence in the pronunciation indicating long-continued oral use from time immemorial by English and Scotch Masons. *Harodim* in Hebrew means "Rulers or Provosts," as Anderson pointed out in 1723. For the man who spoke of Masonry as "the Royal Art," and compared it to a beautiful "Arch," also knew that *Harodim* was a Masonic term; he had taken the trouble to ascertain its meaning.

This word, therefore, would seem to support Gould's suggestion that originally the word "Arch," when used with reference to the Royal Arch Degree, had the sense of the Greek *Archos*, which means "Chief," as in the words *Arch-bishop*, *Arch-angel*, etc. Companion Stokes objects to this that he has never come across the word *Arch-Mason*. Probably not; we do not endorse Gould's opinion—

that is, we do not say that he is right in deriving it from the Greek; we only remark that the argument is plausible because the Royal Arch Companions were the Chiefs or Rulers of the Fraternity; but their proper title was the Hebrew one of *Harodim*. The word *Arch* is undoubtedly English, and is to be taken in its ordinary acceptation; but the Greek *Archos* and *Archontes* (plural) happen to express the same idea as *Harodim*.

We conclude, therefore, that the Royal Arch stands for the "Masters' Lodges" of 200 years ago, and is the continuation of the Highrodiam Degree in which we find three Chiefs (in Greek *Archontes*—a word used in the Instituted Mysteries of Greece), a King, a High Priest, and a Chief Scribe.

But how can we account for the use of *Heredom*, a variant of *Harodim*, in Masonry? The use of Hebrew words in Masonry will be discussed later on; for the present we would only say that evidently it was taken from the Kabbalists, the predecessors of the Masons.

In 1782 there was held a Masonic Congress at Wilhelmsbad, for the purpose, we are told,

of "rescuing Masonry from the state of confusion in which it was involved," through the multiplication of Degrees that had taken place. Among other things the Congress asked its English representative for information about "*Mount Heredom*." Some sort of reply was given to the Continental Masons; but in a French memorandum, dated "Paris, 28th January 1784," the Lodge *Amis Reunis* state that the answer received does not cover the whole ground. Bro. General Charles Rainsford, therefore, recognising this fact, referred them to Jewish lore by writing this:

"CABBALA

הר אדני

Mons Domini

Malchuth."

That is to say, General Rainsford explained Heredom by reference to the *Har Adonai*, which in Hebrew means "Mount of the Lord," writing *Adonai* in order to avoid saying *Jehovah*.

That same idea, he said, was expressed by the word *Malchuth* ("Kingship"), which is the name for the last of the "Ten Sephiroth"

in the Kabbalistic system. The attainment of "Kingship" was the culminating point in the development of Masonic character, for, as the Kabbalists said, *Malchuth* included all the other *Sephiroth*; that is to say, all the moral attributes. It is thus we get the conception of the "Mount of Initiation."

We endorse the answer given on that occasion by the representative of English Freemasonry; for it explains how the Masons became *Harodim* or "Rulers."

The argument from the meaning of the word *Harodim* can be clinched by quoting the words used by the M.E.Z. in our present Ritual: "And we hereby constitute you PRINCES and RULERS amongst us, etc."

CHAPTER IV

KABBALISM

THE suggestion has been made that Kabbalism is the parent of Freemasonry; but can that claim be substantiated? The "Kabbalists" are a strange people; they appear in history in a surprising manner, and they vanish almost suddenly and quite unexpectedly. Whither have they gone? They were a Jewish Secret Society, professing peculiar ideas about the Nature of God, similar to the Gnostics of earlier days, who were also organised as a Fraternity and had secrets.

They felt great reverence for the volume of the S.L., and yet they were not strict legalists. They were intensely devout, treasuring up and concealing their mystic lore as something of great value; their views differed from those of the ordinary Jew. They were syncretists; that is, believing that at bottom all religions are practically one, they sought to find common

ground for Jews, Christians, and Moham-medans, and thus harmonise their several systems of thought.

Kabbalism regarded absolute Deity as something unknowable, and perhaps on this account it might be described as the precursor of modern agnosticism. Absolute Deity had neither form nor shape; it was like an elevated Light which sent forth its rays in every direction but could only be known by its attributes and by these taken singly and separately.

It was also described as "an indivisible Point," without limits or dimensions, of inexpressible purity and brightness. This savours of Geometry, recalling Euclid's definition of the Point as something without magnitude or parts. It also helps one to understand the reference of Craft Masons to a certain "Point within a Circle" to which they must remain circumscribed if they would avoid error; that Circle is, of course, the Sphere of the Universe, or of Reality, and the Point signifies the Architect thereof.

The attributes, agencies, or qualities of Deity were called the *Sephiroth*, and were

supposed to be Ten in number, presumably because the initial of the divine Name was the letter-numeral *Yod* = 10.

The Kabbalists conceived an "Ocean of Divinity," and distinguished three Entities of some sort as having existed *ab æterno*; that is, "from the beginning," and they defined them with great metaphysical subtlety thus:

- (1) The Divine Substance;
- (2) The Logos, or Creative Idea;
- (3) The articulate Creative Word, or "Spirit,"
which was one with the former two.

These three are referred to in the Mishna (ix., Chapter I) as follows: "One is the Spirit of the Living God, blessed be His Name, who liveth for ever! Voice, Spirit, Word, this is the Holy Ghost." And yet, although the Kabbalists distinguished these three Things in God, they were always firm in proclaiming His Unity.

All through this system the number Three was very conspicuous. For in enumerating the Ten Sephiroth they began with a fundamental Triad, which consisted of *Crown*, *Intelligence*, and *Wisdom*. These three were

quite distinct from the "Ocean of Divinity" that followed, and which, they said, divided itself into seven seas, denominated *Love, Justice, Beauty, Firmness, Splendour, Foundation, Kingdom.*

There were three Dominions, or "Three Witnesses," viz. the Macrocosm, or Universe; the Microcosm, or Man; and the Revolution of Time. But God was "the centre" of all things: the "Heavenly Dragon" was the pivot of the Macrocosm; the Heart of Man was the mainspring of Human Nature; and the Year was determined by the revolving Zodiac; but these three converged on the Point within a Circle.

There were three primordial elements, viz. ether, water, and air.

The Universe was said to have been brought into existence by the power of "Numbers, Speech, and Writing."

The Ten Sephiroth might also be divided into Three Triads, three times three. For, besides the first Triad, already mentioned, *Crown, Intelligence, Wisdom*, which represented the intellectual world, there was a second which stood for the moral or sensuous world,

Beauty, Love, Justice, and a third relating to the material world, *Splendour, Firmness, Foundation*. The last *Sephira, Kingdom*, expressed the harmonious combination of all the various principles, potencies, or powers of the Godhead, and in practice signified the truth that God is "King."

Now, the first of these Triads finds a reflection in the three Grand Masters who are said to have presided at the construction of K.S.T., as we hear in Craft Masonry. And they reappear in the Chapter in the more definite characters of a King, a High Priest, and a Chief Scribe, or Prophet. The Craft Mason represents those Grand Masters as Three Pillars, to which he gives the symbolic names of "Wisdom, Strength, Beauty." And this was also done long ago by the Kabbalists, for they arranged the Ten Sephiroth so as to suggest Three Pillars, actually calling them "Pillars," thus:

	Crown	
Intelligence	Beauty	Wisdom
Justice	Foundation	Love
Splendour	Kingdom	Firmness

The one on the left was called "the Pillar of Judgment," the one on the right was "the Pillar of Mercy," and the central one was "the Pillar of Benignity."

In the Craft we make much of the twin Pillars, B. on the left, and J. on the right, but very little is ever said about the central one, the Master Pillar. On the other hand, when we enter the Chapter everything seems to be subordinated to that Pillar in the centre, and the other two seem to have been forgotten.

The Sephiroth suggested to the Kabbalists the idea of a God-Man, "the Heavenly Adam," who, they said, was the pattern after which all men had been created. And whatever men might be like now, either morally or spiritually, eventually they all would reproduce that Ideal Character, the attributes which the Sephiroth stand for, sharing the *Kingdom* in the bosom of the Archetypal Man.

And this seems to be the thought, too, that underlies the Raising Ceremony ; for when the M.M. is raised he is supposed to attain that Ideal, and then he is reunited with the Master Man and all those who have gone through the same experience.

Before a man reaches that point, however, he has had three distinct tests, three transmigrations. The first and the second reincarnations might "prove a slip," but the third time the purified spirit is reunited with the Heavenly Adam "by a loving kiss"; that is, by a symbol of perfect unity and concord, which with the Masons has given place to the so-called 5 P. of F.

For undoubtedly the Raising Ceremony is derived from the Kabbalists. There is still extant a Lecture 600 or 700 years old, which used to be rehearsed at the reception of Candidates: it is called the *Idra Rabba*. The copy that has been preserved for these 600 years was used on some memorable occasion not specified, and, as in the case of the *Sepher-ha-Zohar*, it purports to be a Discourse by Simon bin Jochai to the adepts of the Mystical Science who came to him for enlightenment. *Idra Rabba* is not a long discourse, but at the end of it there is a Postscript informing us that during the recital three Brethren have "died." There is no lamentation, no regret, only the bald statement that the Brethren have "died" in that short interval, while the Lecture

was being rehearsed. Here, then, we have the figurative death of the M.M.

Here we infer that in ancient times it was required that there should be "three" candidates going together through that Ceremony; even as in the R.A. Chapter, too, there are "three" M.M.'s from Babylon who go through practically the same experience. We have seen that in Kabbalism everything went by threes, as in Freemasonry. The writer has already shown this in his book, *The Arithmetic of Freemasonry*.

Agreeably with this very ancient precedent, the Old American Ritual provided that there always must be "three Candidates" for exaltation, neither more nor less.

Our interpretation of the Postscript in *Idra Rabba* is confirmed by other documents which state that at this Ceremony the terrestrial was brought into connection with the celestial, and that the Candidate came into union with the spirits of great men, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, etc., who were supposed to be present and possibly were personated by the Companions; and he then was said to be reunited with the great worthies

of past times, "the former companions of his toil." *Idra Rabba* was the Manual of "The Great Assembly"; but on less solemn occasions the Kabbalists used another Manual called *Idra Suta*, "The Small Assembly."

With the Kabbalists *Seven* was a symbolic number as much as *Three* was. Thus the Temple of Solomon was said to stand in the midst of the world, with the four points of the compass, E., W., N., and S., round about; and these with "the Temple" itself, and with the addition of "Height" and "Depth," the Shekinah-glory above, and the Vault below, gave a total of seven, or a *Heptad* of ideas.

They pointed out that in Genesis i. 2 there are only seven Hebrew words, and they explained it as an allusion to the Seven Mansions of Paradise. They expressed the idea of "the Grand Lodge above" by speaking of the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of the Seven Halls, "wherein one day (they said) the whole pleroma of souls, cleansed and purified, would be reunited with the Highest Soul, reincorporated into the bosom of the Infinite Source whence they emanated."

This is foreshadowed in the way we advance

in the R.A. Chapter, when we march towards the Source of Light, for then we traverse Seven Regions which end with the *Sanctum Sanctorum* proper. The Kabbalistic book, *Sepher-ha-Zohar*, was at one time known as the *Midrash*, or "Exposition" of the words "Let there be Light"; and in *The Apocalypse of Freemasonry* the writer has shown that both the Craft and the Royal Arch are also concerned with a philosophy of light and darkness.

Now, we may inquire, how old is this Kabbalistic system? The question is a debatable one, but we shall briefly state the facts.

The *Sepher-ha-Zohar* professes to be the work of Simon bin Jochai, who flourished in A.D. 70-110, and was the embodiment of Jewish mysticism at that distant period; but we accept Dr Ginsburg's verdict that it is a pseudograph of the thirteenth century. The book, however, is merely a commentary on the doctrines of this Theosophy, which at the time when it was composed had already a very respectable number of adherents.

The *Jetzira*, or "Book of Creation," is a much earlier work. Rabbi Jahudah-ha-Levi,

who was born about 1086, knew of it, and attributed it to Abraham. That sounds fabulous, but it is not an incredible thing, as we shall see. It is commonly believed to be a product of the ninth century of the Christian era. But on reading it, as in the case of the Zohar, we find that at the time when it was written Kabbalism was already considered an ancient science which had been handed down orally from generation to generation.

The Talmud mentions a book called *Jetzira*; and, if the work we know be identical with that mentioned in the Talmud, its age would have to be put back from the ninth to the second century.

The *Jetzira* of the Talmud was undoubtedly of Babylonian origin, for it propounded some speculations on the artificial production of plants and metals, which had been borrowed from a book written by one Gutami, about B.C. 1400, under the title of *Agricultura Nabat*. This comes measurably near to the times of Abraham, and recalls the opinion of Jahudah-ha-Levi.

Of course our *Jetzira* may be a fragment, or a rehash, or a paraphrase of the original

work. Anyhow, the book itself shows that Kabbalism was very ancient even in the ninth century. It will be interesting to the reader to hear that in the *Jewish Encyclopædia* it is stated that the Apocalyptic literature of the two centuries preceding the Christian era "contains the chief elements of the Kabbalah."

There is a tradition that Aaron (some call him "*Abu* Aaron") bin Samuel-ha-Nasi of Babylonia, who died about 870, brought the Kabbalah to Europe from old Babylon. For a long time he was considered to be a legendary character; but now, after it has been found that the man is mentioned in the *Chronicle of Ahimaaz*, written in 1054, the *Jewish Encyclopædia* says we can no longer treat him as a creature of the imagination. He existed and brought Babylonian ideas among the Jews of Europe.

Kabbalism, like the Royal Arch, was much concerned with the Name of God. After the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, when the Jewish Priests gave up the practice of uttering the Divine Name because they felt that they were not worthy, they adopted in its place a 12-letter cryptogram, which they

deliberately pronounced so rapidly that those within hearing could not perceive what they said. This secret Name was communicated "only to the most pious of the Priests." And there is evidence to show that it was not lost but continued to be in use in the Middle Ages many centuries after.

In addition to this 12-letter Name, however, we hear about another Divine Name which the Kabbalists made much mystery of, one of 42 letters, "which was only communicated to such as are pious (*Chasidim*), not easily provoked, not given to drinking, and not self-opinionated. He who holds this Name and preserves it inviolate is beloved above, cherished below, and respected of every creature, and he is heir of both worlds, the world that is now and the world that is to come."

Maimonides observed long ago (1135-1204) that the 42 letters "cannot possibly make one single word, and that they must, therefore, have composed several words. There is no doubt that these words convey certain ideas which were designed to *bring a man nearer to the Conception of the Divine Essence*. . . .

Moral qualifications and a great preparation are required."

The sentiment expressed by the words in italics recalls what we say: "At each step you will approach nearer to the S. and M.N. of T.T.A.L.G.M.H. Maimonides may or may not have known the Name, but he evidently knew of the stringent conditions under which the great secret was communicated to the Initiates.

Now, the erudite Franck has been able to identify this Name as the Ten Sephiroth, proving thereby that the Sephiroth are at least eighteen centuries old—the age of the Talmud. Here are the actual Hebrew characters:

כתר — חכמה — בינה — נדולה — גבורה —
תפארת — נעה — הוד — מלכות — ויסוד = 42

Someone, overlooking this most convincing solution, has advocated the theory that the 42 letters in question were ten divine appellations from the Hebrew Scriptures. But how can he be sure of the ten divine appellations he gives? What is there especially in favour of them? In the Old Testament the divine appellations are very numerous, and, if we are

allowed to choose ten at will, it will be easy to make several combinations, each of which will total 42 letters. In the case of the Ten Sephiroth, however, we have a unique formula which admits of no elasticity, which was of great significance for the Kabbalists, and, including the *Vau* conjunctive before the last Sephira, it yields exactly 42 letters, neither more nor less.

It may be asked whether this can be described as a "Name of God"? But the Sephiroth were the enumeration of the Attributes of God by which alone a man could know Him, and that is usually what is meant by a "Name."

The Kabbalist also said that if a man penetrated the significance of the Name he would perceive six *Yods* (*the initial of YHWH repeated six times*) in the pure sky—three to the left and three to the right (N. and S.); and three *Vaus* hovering over the Heavenly Arch, nine letters altogether, or three for each of the three Pillars, which they conceived as arranged in a line from N. to S.; that is, *Wisdom*, *Benignity* (viz. Beauty of Character), and *Strength*. The Heavenly Arch was supposed to be marked by the three

Vaus in the central Pillar, recalling the three Arch-stones in the Vault.

Dr Ginsburg explains these nine letters as referring to the Priestly Benediction which was supposed to follow those who had mastered the secret of the 42-letter Name.

Such a man, too, would perceive in the morning, "towards the West," a Pillar hanging perpendicularly over the earthly Paradise, and simultaneously a second Pillar hanging over the centre of the true Paradise, this latter being luminous. This reference to the twin Pillars is difficult to explain; but we may recollect that at the Porchway of the Temple of Melkarth, at Tyre, there were two Pillars (*answering to B. and J.*), and, according to Herodotus, one of them was luminous, emitting a bright light at night.

All the great Talmudists of Spain in the Middle Ages, Nachmanides (1195-1270), Ben-Aderith (1235-1310), Todros Abulafia (1234-1306), etc., were Kabbalists, and were fully persuaded of the high antiquity of their Craft. The fact recalls the record there is of some Spanish Jews who, having emigrated from Holland to the American Colonies, in the

year 1658, are said to have conferred "the Degrees of Masonry" on some of their number after a service in their Synagogue. That they were Spanish Jews — *Sephardim* — is clearly proved by their names. And so the record is an undesigned piece of evidence showing how some of the descendants of the Mediaeval Kabbalists who were expelled from Spain at the close of the fifteenth century, had wandered far and wide, to England, to Holland, and America, and there promoted the old Art under the new name of "Masonry!" It is in the fifteenth century, when Kabbalism disappears, that Freemasonry comes into view.

Dr Ginsburg asserts that the Kabbalah became "partially known to Christians" between the years 1463 and 1494, through Raymond Lully. But his chronology needs rectifying, for he instances Pico de Mirandola as having become a Kabbalist. Now, when Pico de Mirandola was born in 1463, Raymond Lully had already been dead nearly 150 years. Clearly this spread of Kabbalism among Christians must be antedated. Lully was initiated in the thirteenth century, and there is no telling what influences were set

in motion by that wonderful man. And yet it is true that the Kabbalah was only "partially" revealed to Christians; they were not capable of exploring all its mysteries.

Pico de Mirandola embraced Kabbalistic ideas through a Rabbi, Jochonan Aleman, who had come to Italy from Constantinople, but had come in contact with Spanish-speaking Jews, for he bore a surname that, although Spanish, points to his having originated from Germany; for *Aleman* means "*German*." Pico de Mirandola initiated Reuchlin, of whom we know that he relied on Geometry as one of the aids for diffusing the Speculative Science, holding that the Tetrad stands for the four elements of geometrical matter, viz. the Point, the Line, the Surface, and the Solid.

Reuchlin wrote a book which is now of the greatest rarity, *De Verbo Mirifico* (Basle, 1494), under the symbolic name of *Capnio*, in which he expressed the opinion that the Tetrad or Tetraktys, that is, the Holy Quaternion of Pythagoras, arose from the Sacred 4-letter Name of God, the Tetragrammation. He also maintained that Pythagoras' veneration for the Decad, as evolved from the Tetrad,

was founded on the Ten Sephiroth, the Hebrew letter-numeral *Yod* being not only the initial of YHWH but the number of the Sephiroth, for *Yod* stands for 10. He claimed that Pythagoras was one of the Masters of the Speculative Science of the Kabbalists, as the Mediaeval Masons also claimed him to be a Master of theirs.

When we come to explain the origin of the Triliteral Symbol, *Aleph, Beth, Lamed*, which is very conspicuous in the Chapter, we shall see that there can be no manner of doubt as to Kabbalism having been the source whence we have taken our Mystic Rites.

CHAPTER V

OUR CONNECTION WITH THE KABBALISTS

IN London there was once a Lodge of Speculative Masons which was carried on under the patronage of the Masons' Company. Many of the members were professional and public men, not builders at all. We become aware of its existence because, in 1620, seven men were initiated there who were already members of the Company. They called it *The Acception*, and it is on that account that to this day the Freemasons are called "Free and *Accepted* Masons"—the epithet carrying with it some evidence of our kinship with the Masons of the beginning of the seventeenth century. Of course we cannot trace the origin of this Lodge.

But this word "Acception" is worthy of study. It has become obsolete, and its meaning is not quite understood now. It is somewhat ambiguous, for it means "Reception,"

but it referred more to the things *received* by the Candidate than to the admission of the Candidate himself. As a matter of fact, it was simply an English rendering of the Hebrew word *Kabbalah*, which means "Reception," although, strangely enough, no Masonic scholar has ever noticed it.

After the Jews were expelled from Spain, at the close of the fifteenth century, many of them emigrated to the Levant on the one hand and to Holland and England on the other. But wherever they went they took their Kabbalistic lore too. They were stripped of their worldly possessions, but the secret treasures of the Kabbalah none could take away from them.

During the following century the Jews sunk to a very low condition socially: they were a sort of pariahs who seldom rose above the position of petty traders and artisans. Yet some Christians were willing enough to learn from them. Happily the increased zeal for the study of the Bible in the original languages, which was a result of the Protestant Reformation, created a demand for Greek and Hebrew teachers. This placed the Jewish

scholars in an advantageous position, and this, in turn, helped to promote the spread of Kabbalistic ideas and of Masonry among Christians.

Of course in Spain, owing to the Moorish conquest, there were quite a number of Christians who knew Hebrew, Arabic, and Greek; and therefore it is not surprising that some of them were admitted to a knowledge of the Kabbalah, as, for instance, Raymond Lully. But when the Spanish Jews came to England a strange development took place and Kabbalism became the parent of Freemasonry. The transition from the one to the other is not recorded in history, probably because it was gradual, but there is abundant evidence for it.

The Jews were expelled from Spain soon after the fall of Granada at the close of the fifteenth century; but before that date England seems to have had its Raymond Lully in Adelard of Bath. For when he went to Spain, about 1130, he must have come in contact with the Kabbalists, for he was an orientalist of no mean order.

The first occurrence of the word "Free-

mason" is in 1375, and it is in connection with the Masons' Company, which we saw was the patron of Masonry under the name of "The Acception." It cannot be mere coincidence that, fifteen years after the first occurrence of the word Freemason, the *Regius MS.*, the oldest of our Masonic Charges, was composed by an unknown hand.

Bro. J. S. M. Ward says about the *Regius MS.*: "At first it was taken for granted that these Charges referred exclusively to operatives, but closer investigation convinced such eminent Freemasons as Gould and Albert Pike that there was much which could only be described as speculative and only capable of comprehension by fairly intellectual men."

We have already referred to the Jews at Rhode Island in 1658. They were Speculative Masons. The record of their doings is in English, implying that those men were English-speaking Jews. They had come from Holland, but their names show that they had originally come from Spain; that they were *Sephardim*; in other words, cultured Jews.

And we may note incidentally that the

oldest Synagogue in London is that of the so-called "Spanish Jews."

In this connection we should bear in mind that Holland, and the whole of the Netherlands (whence they are said to have emigrated to the American Colonies), had before been under Spanish rule.

Now, the significant thing about those Jews is that they "conferred the Degrees of Maçonrie" *after a Synagogue Service*; for it implies, not merely that they were religious Jews, but that their Masonry must have been of a religious type to be compatible with the sacredness of the Sabbath and consonant with the Jewish religion; in other words, Kabbalistic. Bro. Songhurst tells us that "the Masters' Lodges" at the beginning of the eighteenth century also used to meet on Sundays.

Of course we know nothing of the doings of those men, when in Lodge, any more than we know about "The Acception." But Aubrey in 1691, who confessedly was a cowan, and all the earlier writers who referred to the Freemasons, assert that they had secrets and mysteries which could not be divulged

and that the outside world knew nothing of these. It will not assist us, therefore, to inquire as to the nature of those secrets, and if we find anything it will be indirectly and by way of inference.

An American Mason wanted to ignore the record at Rhode Island because he could not conceive Masonry prior to 1717. But the original document was traced, and neither its age nor style could be questioned. It had every characteristic of truth; it was written with no ulterior purpose; it harmonised with all the facts of the case; while incidentally, and quite undesignedly, it accounted for the evident Hebrew influence in Freemasonry.

We have already seen that, in 1784, Bro. General Rainsford, as the representative of English Freemasonry in Paris, admitted that the word *Harodim*, used in England for a Degree in which the Candidates were all Installed Masters, had reference to the Kabalah, and indicated "the *Mount* of Jehovah"; that is, a Supreme Degree, for "Mount" signifies a climax.

Dermott mentions a contemporary Jewish Lodge of "Masons," and quotes the Prayer

which used to be offered up in it. This prayer is of the highest evidential value, reflecting the view which the Jews of 200 years ago took of "Masonry," confirming all that has been said thus far as to its origin. We shall give it here, and afterwards comment on the words:

"Oh Lord, excellent art Thou in Thy Truth; and there is nothing great in comparison with Thee; for Thine is the Praise, from all the works of Thy hands, for evermore.

"Enlighten us, we beseech Thee, in the true knowledge of Masonry; by the sorrows of Adam, Thy first-made man; by the blood of Abel, the Holy One; by the righteousness of Seth in whom Thou wast well pleased; by Thy covenant with Noah, in whose architecture Thou wast pleased to save the seed of Thy beloved. Number us not among those that know not Thy statutes, nor the Divine Mysteries of the Secret Kabbalah.

"But grant, we beseech Thee, that the Ruler of this Lodge may be endued with Knowledge and Wisdom, to instruct and explain his Sacred Mysteries, as our Holy Brother, Moses, did in his Lodge, to Aaron,

to Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron, and the Seventy Elders of Israel.

“And grant that we may understand, learn, and keep all Thy Statutes and Commandments of the Lord, and His Holy Mystery, pure and undefiled, unto our lives’ end.—AMEN, Lord.”

The prayer is so characteristically Jewish, and at the same time so thoroughly Masonic, that its genuineness is beyond question. The composer, whoever he was, was well versed in the Theosophy of the Kabbalists; certainly he was not Dermott, who could never have used certain Hebraisms that occur, reflecting peculiar Jewish ideas, such as “Thy beloved” for the “faithful men,” and “AMEN, Lord,” which implies a knowledge of the Jewish forms: *Amen* being a prayer, the Being to whom it was addressed had to be mentioned at the close as at the beginning. Dermott did not preserve this prayer for any special purpose; he simply handed it down for what it might be worth; but it seems to have been traditional.

In this Prayer we see that the Masons who used it deprecate being numbered among

those who have no knowledge of the Law “nor the Divine Mysteries of the Secret Kabbalah.” This is said undesignedly, without any intention to put us on the scent; yet it verifies our main thesis, enabling us to trace our descent as heirs of the Kabbalists.

After the ejaculation: “Oh Lord, excellent art Thou in Thy *Truth*,” there is a petition for *Light* as a means of obtaining “the true knowledge of Masonry,” and this is based on four distinct pleas: “By the sorrows of Adam . . . by the blood of Abel . . . by the righteousness of Seth . . . and by the covenant with Noah.” The last, Noah, is referred to as an Architect; that is to say, a “Mason.”

Quite naturally there is a clause about “the Ruler of this Lodge,” the W.M., called “Ruler” because in Hebrew the Installed Masters were called *Harodim*, “Rulers,” as we have already seen. He stood for the first Sephira, *Kithar*, “Crown”; but now they pray that he may have “Knowledge and Wisdom,” viz. the first and second Sephiroth—*Hokmah* and *Binah*—to instruct the Brethren under him, and “explain their secret Mysteries,” by which is meant, not merely what he says

in opening and closing the Lodge, nor even the words uttered in making Masons, but the exposition of the secret doctrine which used to be imparted for the improvement of Masons; in other words, the unwritten elements of the Kabbalah.

As the Burning Bush has always been one of the symbols cherished by Masons, which they included in their Charts or Diagrams, the Ritual must at one time have contained some reference to it. Moses is not now mentioned in the Craft, but this silence implies that the allusion to him was in some other part of Masonry; and that could only be in the Royal Arch, where Masters were enlightened about many things which are traceable to Moses, as, for instance, certain of our signs.

The Name revealed to Moses at the Burning Bush was of great consequence in Kabbalism; the Kabbalists professed to know the secrets of its vocalisation, which had been lost.

The secret properly belonged to the High Priest of Israel. But it is a mistake to think that it was unlawful for other people to pro-

nounce the Divine Name or that they had no right to utter it.

The High Priest had to invoke it solemnly ten times when he entered the *Sanctum Sanctorum* once a year for the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement. But the ordinary Priest also uttered it in some way or other every day when reciting the *Priestly Benediction*.

It is nevertheless true that the uttering of the said Name was given up soon after the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus. In the Talmud we read that it used to be entrusted to the Priests who were *Chasidim*; that is, who were "Pious," in some technical sense; the term being taken by some as meaning Priests who were "Essenes."

The Kabbalists of the Middle Ages professed to reveal to their Candidates that great and incomprehensible Name, too; which fact recalls the words of Josephus when he refers to the Tetragrammation. He has just related, as we do in the Chapter, how Moses asked God to reveal His Name; and that wish was granted to him when he was made acquainted with the 4-letter Name. But now Josephus makes this astounding remark:

“Concerning which it is not lawful for me to say any more.”

Most certainly it was not the Law of Moses that forbade his writing on the subject, but evidently he was under some sort of obligation not to do so; he neither could utter it, nor explain it, as was also the case with the Kabbalists of a later age.

The idea of Moses instructing the Brethren of his Lodge occurring in the Prayer offered by the Jewish Masons, is based on something related in the Mishna—that is, the Second or Oral Law which served as the text of the Talmud; and it is very significant. For in the Preface to the Mishna it is asserted that Moses imparted *four* times to Aaron, *three* times to Eleazar and Ithamar (*mark well the group of three persons here*), *twice* to the Seventy Elders—that is to say, “the Holy Sanhedrin,” and *once* to the common people, all the laws that he had received from God and the explanation of them. Afterwards he reduced those laws to writing; but the explanation was never written, and this explanation was the foundation of the Kabbalah, the oral tradition which the Kabbalists claimed to

have received and which they transmitted from age to age. That explanation cleared up not only the sense of particular words and phrases in the text of the written Law, but elucidated the Name, Nature, and Character of the M.H.

This reference to the Mishna is most important. Dermott could in no way be responsible for it; indeed, we doubt whether Dermott was aware of the allusion. But the reader may recollect that in the Royal Arch the Principal Sojourner has something to say about "our Holy Brother Moses" presiding at one of the Grand Originals, viz. "the First or Holy Lodge." Surely, then, this could not have been an invention of the compilers of our *modern* Ritual.

Those who only knew the written Law of Moses had only the shadow; the book had a veil thrown over it; but the R.A. Brethren had found the true Law, had the reality, for they had obtained the Light, the true knowledge; they understood what lay behind the text.

Dr Edouard Neville in a paper which he contributed to the *Memoirs* of the *Academie*

des Inscriptions in 1910, on "The Finding of the Law by King Josiah," has called our attention to the custom of making "Foundation Deposits," which prevailed in Asia and Egypt, whether in vaults especially built under the great Temples, or under the walls, or at the base of the Statue of the God. He discusses the nature of the find, and concludes that it was a summary of the Mosaic Law, and that the document must have been contemporaneous with the foundation of K.S.T.

Dr Neville has subsequently elaborated his views about this in his new book, *Archæology of the Old Testament*.

The story is simple enough: the Temple was being repaired, and the demolition of some part of the fabric exposed the Scroll of the Law.

Well, therefore, may Bro. Crawley, in the *Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge* (1911), say that this brings our R.A. Legend within the bounds of "possibility!"

We believe that Josiah's finding of the Law is history; whereas our finding of "something" in the Chapter is an allegorical repre-

sentation, teaching the need of going deeper than the common people, so that we may find the true law of God: we have the shadow; we must find the reality.

And, therefore, it is not necessary to follow the Irish practice of making the Principals the representatives of Josiah, Hilkiah, and Shaphan. Why should not Zerubbabel and his colleagues have again discovered the old Foundation Deposit which, presumably, was replaced? The circumstances warrant the supposition, for some men had been sent to prepare the ground for the foundation of the second Temple where the first formerly stood.

The mention of "Elders" is also significant. It is reminiscent of the Sanhedrin, which consisted of 70 Elders and the President; although Simon bin Azzai, about A.D. 150, says that at Jamnia there was a second President or Vice-President, making the total 72.

The "Antients of the Order," referred to by Dr Plot in 1682 as being indispensable to hold a Masonic Initiation, are evidently the men who controlled the Order; "at least five or six," he says, "were necessary."

In the Beaumont MS. (*British Museum*,

No. 2054), which dates from 1690, in speaking of "the manner of taking the Oath" at the making of Freemasons, it is said, in Latin: "Then one of the *Elders* holds out a book, and he or they (*those who are sworn*) shall place his or their hands upon it, and the following precepts shall be read."

It is very significant that the President of the Sanhedrin was called the *Nasi*; and Aaron bin Samuel, who was credited with bringing the Kabbalah from Babylon in the ninth century, was also surnamed *Ha Nasi of Babylon*, showing that he claimed the rank of President of a Sanhedrin; we should now have called him "M.E.Z."

The phrase "His Holy Mystery, pure and undefiled," has a striking parallel in the expressions we use to-day in the Craft Lodge: "Masonry . . . pure and unsullied."

First, "the Ruler of the Lodge" is said to explain "his Holy Mysteries" in the plural; but next the Brethren pray that they may "understand, learn, and keep" *His Holy Mystery* in the singular; that is, all the Mysteries of the Order viewed collectively as if they were one.

The epithet "Holy" comes up time and again in the Prayer as in our Supreme Degree; it agrees with the Book of Constitutions which speaks of "the Order of the *Holy* Royal Arch." The Hebrew "Holy" meant "Separate; kept from the reach of the profane." And from ancient times the motto of the Degree has been "*Holiness to the Lord*"; that is, to *Jehovah*.

CHAPTER VI

THE HEBRAIC ELEMENT

FREEMASONRY being largely a Hebrew product makes use of Hebrew words. At one time the writer thought that this was done to dignify the Craft, or the Royal Arch, as the case might be; or that, perhaps, it was to inspire awe in the ignorant Candidate. The use of corrupt forms favoured the idea that the originator of this practice had but a superficial knowledge of Hebrew, and one was disposed to postulate a pedantic mind making a show of learning. But this theory was disproved by the facts, and had to be given up as untenable.

In particular, the Hebrew element in the Royal Arch is a fact to be reckoned with. Companion Stokes suggests that this may have been introduced, or enlarged, by Dermott. Poor Dermott, how many crimes are being laid at his door! The suggestion is purely gratuitous; for, though he knew a little Hebrew, there is

evidence to show that the Hebrew element is the oldest thing in Masonry, and that, far from being enlarged, it has been whittled down as time went on, until now we find it reduced to a minimum.

When a man exalted in 1746 could write, after mature deliberation, "The Royal Arch I firmly believe to be the root, heart, and marrow of Masonry," we must assume that he honestly believed it, and that he could neither be the fabricator nor the renovator of the Degree. In fact, Dermott, when speaking thus of the Royal Arch, stood very high in Craft Masonry. He had compared the two, and found that the Royal Arch was immensely superior, much older, and the Rock on which the Craft had been founded.

The Hebrew language may properly be called the official language of Masonry. Our predecessors spoke Hebrew, and showed a most profound knowledge of the language. And from time immemorial the Secrets of Masonry have been couched in that language, some acquaintance with it being necessary to fully grasp the meaning of things. Obviously the use of Hebrew words goes much further

back than Dermott and the Grand Lodge of London.

Take, for instance, "the Mason Word." Whatever it may be, the mere fact that the Masons of the eighteenth century said that it was as old as the Tower of Babel, or at least as the time of Solomon, implies that it was Hebrew. For at the time when the statement was made the scholars of Europe were unanimous in saying that Hebrew had been the original language of mankind; it certainly was the language of King Solomon; and it probably was (they said) that of the builders of Babel. By so saying, therefore, it was clear that the Mason Word had been used from time immemorial, and that the Masons assumed it to be derived from the Hebrew language.

Similarly all the Symbolic Words and Pass Words of the Three Degrees in Craft Masonry, and the Words used in the Royal Arch, are Hebrew. They have been handed down orally from generation to generation in a more or less distorted form, but they are still recognisable.

That the P.W. leading to the Second Degree originated with people who were familiar with the Hebrew language is obvious from the

picture by which that Word is illustrated. The said Word had two different acceptations; it meant "an ear of corn" and also "a water-fall." And so they deliberately combined these two meanings in one pictogram in which both objects appear.

Long before 1717 there was a variety of Words used; for in the *Harleian MS.* (No. 2059), written about 1665, there is a scrap of paper attached to it on which appears what the W.M. had to tell the Candidate: "There are several words and signs of a Free Mason to be revealed to you as you will answer before God at the great and terrible Day of Judgment and fellows of the said Society of free Masons, so help me, God." Note that "Several Words and Signs" is in the plural, implying a variety of Degrees.

At the end of the *Stanley MS.* of 1677 we find some doggerel rhymes, entitled *The Prophecy of Brother Roger Bacon*, the last lines reading as follows:—

"Free Masons beware Brother Bacon advises,
Interlopers break in and spoil your Devises,
Your Giblin and Squares are well out of Door
And Jachin and Boaz shall be secrets no more."

These rhymes show that some things in Masonry are far older than the Grand Lodge of London. The writer evidently regarded Roger Bacon as a Freemason. It may be pointed out that this is mere satire; but the satirist seems to have had some inside knowledge of Freemasonry, and it seems legitimate to infer that the Masons of 1677 had a tradition that Roger Bacon had belonged to their Order. He lived in the thirteenth century, the palmy days of Kabbalism.

The *Melrose MS.*, No. 2, dating from 1674, is considered to be a copy of the *Melrose MS.*, No. 1, of date 1581, but now missing; in it the Apprentices are styled *Loses*. We suspect that this is derived from the Hebrew *luah*, which in the volume of the S.L. is always translated "a tablet of stone." Anyhow, that is the derivation which the Spanish Dictionary of Rodriguez-Navas gives of the kindred Spanish word *Losa*. The E.A. was considered as a *tabula rasa* waiting for something to be written on it. And we venture to suggest that this Hebrew word is the original form of "Lewises." *Loses* seemed to be meaningless; therefore it was modified into *Lewises*, though

we may note a slight change of the meaning as now used.

The early Masons spoke of the three Jubals, and sometimes played with their names by referring to them as *Jubala*, *Jubalo*, *Jubalum*. Those three men seemed to have stood for an antediluvian "Grand Original Lodge," of which we have lost sight. Those Jubals were known to Sacred History as *Jabal*, *Jubal*, and *Tubal-cain*. Only a clever Hebrew scholar could have seen that Tubal was a word derived from the same root as Jabal and Jubal, being the Hiphil, future, third person singular of יָבַל. Therefore it is clear that the Mediæval Masons were conversant with the Hebrew language. At present only the last of the Jubals is referred to in the Craft, his name being a P.W.

We have already seen that in 1690 a Lodge was formed at Winlaton under the name of *Highrodiam*, and that the name was a variant of *Harodim*, meaning "Rulers, or Prefects"; which also designated a well-known Masonic Degree, where the Candidates were "Masters" and which we believed to be the Royal Arch. The Mother Lodge of Scotland, Kilwinning, used the name of *Heredom* (which is the same

as *Highrodiam* and *Harodim*) as the figurative name of something that Masons aspire to, the Mount, or Summit, or Climax of Initiation. The use of this Hebrew term goes back to very ancient times.

Here we might ask: Why is it that Masons speak of our M., H. *Abiff*? It is because *Abiv* means "his father," or "his Master builder," which was the title applied to that individual. It is not a proper noun at all. Why, then, is it left untranslated? For the simple reason that it was once current among men who understood Hebrew, who passed it on to Christian Masons, who then lost the sense of it and came to regard it as a proper noun. Aaron bin Samuel, the Nasi of Babylon, reputed to have introduced the Kabbalah into Europe, is by some given the title of *Abu*, which is the same as *Abi* or *Abiv*.

The omission of the name H.A. from many of the Old Charges has led some of the Masonic scholars to write a lot of nonsense. Some have argued from this *supposed* silence that the mythos of the Third Degree must have been a modern fabrication surreptitiously introduced since the creation of the Grand Lodge

of 1717. If it were so it would be modern indeed!

This view is not followed by many. Bro. W. J. Hughan, in *Masonic Sketches and Reprints* (New York, 1871), has hazarded the theory that the Mythos was based on an assault committed by Masons on William Colchester, the Master Mason at Colchester, between the years 1415-19. But the evidence for this is exceedingly feeble, and Hughan himself finishes with these words: "One (*story*) may have given rise to the other, *but of course it is idle to speculate, so we forbear.*"

Bro. W. H. Rylands puts the origin of our "legendary history" still further back, for he says, in the positive mood, that it "was composed in answer to the Writ for Returns issued to the Guilds all over the country, in the twelfth year of Richard the Second, A.D. 1388."

The only inference to be drawn from this is that these Brethren did not believe the story to be a newfangled thing. And on examining the Old Charges closely we find that there is no omission at all, there is only a "heling and concealing of the name." It was because our Mediæval Brethren were afraid to betray their

secrets that they did not state in plain language what befell the Chief Artificer of K.S.; but they knew it, and they also knew who were the men who presided at the construction of K.S.T., as they knew, better than we do, the interpretation to be put on the story. We have not improved their Craft; we have deteriorated.

Of course we shall be asked what proofs we have for these assertions, so here they are: It is quite true that the *name* of H.A. is omitted from most of the Old Charges; but certain pseudonyms are used instead, which, on examination, are found to be Hebrew words and to embody a veiled reference to the Widow's Son. These pseudonyms are variously spelled *Amon*, *Aymon*, *Aynone*, *Dynon*, *Benainm*, etc. They are not always correct transliterations of the Hebrew, nor could we expect them to be so, after centuries of oral repetition by men who were not Jews, and knew little, if any, Hebrew.

Amon is simply a Hebrew term signifying "the Chief Artificer." The other forms, *Aymon*, *Aynone*, etc., are evident corruptions of the same word, which is used through a desire to avoid mentioning H.A., his proper

name. Naturally with the Masons who understood Hebrew, such as the Kabbalists were, the reference would be obvious enough.

Dynon must have arisen through mistaking the Gothic A. for D. or through a defective memory when the MS. copied had become defaced, writing *Dynon* for *Aymon* or *Aynon*.

Amon was used as a proper noun among the Hebrews, because taking it as a common noun it had the acceptation of "firm or faithful." In the *Encyclopædia Biblica* the writer of the article *Amon* queries its meaning: "Firm? Workmaster?" Prof. Lee gives it the sense of "Constant, unwearying." In Hastings' Bible Dictionary the meaning is defined thus: "A skilled or master workman." What need is there, then, of *conjectures* when the *facts* are perfectly satisfactory? Bro. Covey-Crump argues that in the Song of Solomon (viii) *Amon* should be taken as a proper noun, so that "the hands of a cunning workman" should be "the hands of Amon." But this is a purely gratuitous assumption, without one grain of evidence for it.

And it will not do to say that the Seventy Jewish scholars who, 2000 years ago, translated

the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek “knew nothing of that individual,” and consequently, because of their ignorance, they blundered and translated *Amon* by τεχνίτης. They were good authorities, they knew both Hebrew and Greek, and we must bow to their scholarship. The “hands of *Amon*” means “the hands of a painstaking, constant, and persevering artificer.” And that settles the matter for the plain man and for every reasonable student.

In the *Stanley and Carson MS.* there is another peculiar variant, *Apleo*; and Bro. Tuckett (*Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge*, xxxvi. 281) has suggested that it may be derived from *Palai*, which he says means “secret”; although in reality it means “wonderful.” But perhaps he had in his mind *aphil*, which means “dark, obscure.” If it be derived from this latter we should have another Hebrew word to account for; and it would mean that *Apleo* had replaced *Aymon*. But Bro. H. Poole says that he has experimented in the handwriting of about 1600, and has come to the conclusion that it is “distinctly possible” that it may be a corruption of *Amon* or *Aymō*.

Benaim, which is the Hebrew *Bennaim*, is to be explained in a totally different way. It is the plural of *Ben*, which means "the Master Builder." The word occurs in "*M . . . ben* or *M . . . bena*." (The Masons of 200 years ago were not sure how this was to be pronounced.) But here we shall be asked, "How can a plural noun be applied as the name of an individual? Obviously the original cryptogram did not refer to H.A. individually, but was probably an allusion to "the Three Grand Masters who presided at the building of K.S.T." This was a great secret, which must not be divulged, and hence it could not be expressed in plain language. The Three Grand Masters are represented by the Three Principals, and also in a descending order by "the Three M.M.'s from Babylon," who used to be the Three Candidates.

It is clear, then, that the mythos concerning H.A. was known to Mediæval Masons. And we have already shown that there is equally clear, though indirect, evidence that the mythos used to be enacted in the Ceremonies of Kabbalists.

It is inconceivable that the legend about

H.A. could have been introduced in modern times without a great many Masons objecting to it, for we know that in the eighteenth century the Masons were divided into two great parties; and if it had been a novelty brought in by either faction the other would naturally have protested and there would have been much controversy over the innovation. Let us remember that in the Third Degree the Legend overshadows everything else; it is the third Degree. Cut it out and there remains little else. Therefore, if it had been introduced as an entirely new thing, we should have to say that a new Degree had been fabricated.

We still retain "certain Hebrew characters" as part of our Symbolism. In the Craft we say that in modern times we have substituted them for the letter G. But many Masons emulate our Ancient Brethren by inserting the true characters in the Sacred Symbol; they are shown but not explained. The fact is, that they belong to the Royal Arch, and they will not be properly understood until we come into the Chapter.

We cannot deny, therefore, that the Royal Arch demands some knowledge of Hebrew

for an intelligent understanding of things. If there was nothing else, the allusion to "My people" in the Pass Word would show that here we have something Jewish.

But when the Christian Masons got out of touch with the Kabbalists, the knowledge of Hebrew came to be at a discount and the Hebrew element in the Ritual was watered down; then it was that the purely transitory elements were magnified, that Kabbalism was changed into Freemasonry, and that it all was reduced to the historical legends which have been handed down, except for a modicum of philosophy embodied in it.

The R.A. Masons said that their emblem, the *Tau*, was of Hebrew origin, and that it is identical with the "mark" mentioned by Ezekiel. As the word *Tau* does not appear in the English Authorised Version, or any other version of the Bible, we naturally infer from the statement that the early Masons were able to consult and to scrutinise the Hebrew Scriptures where we really find that the so-called "mark" was a *Tau*.

Now, further, our ancient Brethren seem to have applied the principles of *Gematria* to the

letters which entered into the Symbolic Words. For, counting the Hebrew letters that enter into J.B.O., when written in that script, we shall find the total to be seven; that is, three for the first, two more for the second, and two added to the former five for the whole name. This science was practised by the Kabbalists who resolved many of their doubts and difficulties by looking at the numeral value of the letters and by counting the letters themselves. And, therefore, the occurrence of the number seven in this connection is truly remarkable. We refuse to believe that this is accidental or a mere coincidence. Possibly the seven letters suggested the method of advancing observed by the Companions.

We may also note that the two Symbolic Words of the first two Degrees, B. and J., when spelled in Hebrew, contain *three* and *four* letters, or a total of *seven*. This becomes all the more significant when we hear in the Craft Lodge that the names of the twin Pillars are to be "conjoined." If so, surely we are justified in adding the letters with which the two names are written, $3+4$. There is also some correspondence between this and the

s . . . s by which the M.M. advances to the E.

Again, the name *Abraxas* (about which we shall have something to say when we come to speak of the Astronomy of the Royal Arch) consisted likewise of seven letters.

The letters on the Altar originally consisted of two sets of seven, viz. J.B.O. for the first set and the 4-letter Name added to A.B.L. for the second. This goes to show that the arts of the Kabbalists lie behind much of our symbolism in the Royal Arch.

Curiously enough the initials of J.B.O. when written in Hebrew are *Abi*, אבי, the title which we usually give to our M., H.; *Abiv* means "His (*i.e.* *Solomon's*) Master Builder."

There is a second reason for our refusing to believe that the Oriental element in Masonry is a modern invention, viz. the discovery we have made that the Sacred Word is such that it would have been utterly impossible for the Masons of the eighteenth century either to have devised it or to have known the meaning of it. They found it in the Royal Arch and nowhere else. It was something extremely

ancient, derived from what used to be a prehistoric source, though it has ceased to be prehistoric in our day when the span of history has been so much widened.

As a matter of fact, J.B.O. is simply the names of a Chaldean Trinity read backwards. In Babylonian documents, which have come to light during the last sixty years, that is, since Oliver wrote on the Royal Arch, the three names are given as *Anu, Bel, Ea*; but reversing the order we shall see that they correspond to J.B.O., which agrees with the regular gradation by which the Principals make their advance. We shall have more to say about this further on, when the matter will become quite plain.

The reversal of these names is due to Hebrew influence. The old cuneiform writing was from left to right, like ours; the Hebrews, on the other hand, wrote from right to left. But this is not the only reason, as we shall see.

The Three Names are those of Three Deities who were regarded as coequal; but Anu (answering to our O) was the most important God in the Babylonian pantheon, and the other two followed in their order, 1, 2, 3.

The Hebrews, however, came to place J. first, because J.'s name was cognate with "Jehovah," and, as a matter of fact, J. was but a variant of the Babylonian *Ea*.

Here, then, we have put in brief the whole mystery of the Lost Word, which is found in the Chapter, but remains to be explained. We hope to make this perfectly clear in a further chapter.

It is not surprising that the Three Words should have reached us in a somewhat distorted form. The wonder is that they have been handed down so little altered, that they are so easily recognised, and that their identification is so perfectly obvious. For our English Brethren of 200 and 300 years ago knew very little Hebrew, if any, and they certainly did not know Assyrian, which was then an absolutely extinct language.

It is strange, too, that after our scholars have been denying the antiquity of the Royal Arch, or the existence of any relationship between it and Craft Masonry, we should make this sensational discovery; and, further, that the Grand Lodge of England itself should be able to produce a MS. (No. 2)—which the

experts place at about 1650—with an endorsement on it reading as follows:—

“ In the beginning was the Word,
And the Word was with God,
And the Word was God,
Whose sacred and universal Law
I shall endeavour to observe,
So help me, God.”

The bearing of this on the mooted point calls for no explanation or argument with the R.A. Companion.

J.B.O. are Babylonian names, but the change they have undergone, and especially the inversion of their order, compared with the original Trinity, point to Jewish, or, what is the same, to Kabbalistic influence. It was the Kabbalists who preserved it and handed it down to us.

CHAPTER VII

THE GEOMETRY OF THE ROYAL ARCH

THE Royal Arch has to do with mathematical symbols—the Square, the Right Angle, the Triangle, the Circle, and the Cube. In one place we mention the five regular Platonic bodies, which are: the tetrahedron or pyramid, the hexahedron or cube, the octahedron, the dodecahedron, and the icosahedron; these names sound outlandish, but they only mean geometrical figures of 4, 6, 8, 12, and 20 plane sides; they are said to represent the “Four Elements” and the “Sphere of the Universe.”

In the Chapter, too, we emphasize the symbolic importance of that “strongest of all architectural forms,” the Catenarian Arch, and of the Double Cube, which is a very important symbol. It is by the discovery of the Double Cube, and all that goes with it, that we qualify for the high rank of “Com-

panions.” The Kabbalists used to say that there, at the Altar of Incense, Michael the Archangel sacrificed the souls of the just, that they might ascend pure and fragrant to Jehovah, thereby acquiring the highest spiritual vision as a reward to their life’s endeavours.

As Companions, however, we deal with advanced Geometry, moralising on its figures. Nor should we think that this is only a modern practice, for Dr Dassigny, writing in 1744 (nearly 200 years ago), said that in his time the Royal Arch demanded from its Candidates “undeniable proofs of their skill in Architecture.”

When we say that the form of a Chapter when properly arranged “approaches as nearly as circumstances will permit to a true Catenarian Arch,” the word *Chapter* has to be taken as consisting of the Companions themselves, not the place where they meet, for they, themselves, *are* the Chapter, and they have to arrange themselves in the position which we know is peculiar to them. And this statement is justified by the action of our Principals when in the course of the Ceremonies they form that Catenarian Arch in

the E. At one time it used to be customary for all those present to copy their example by forming similar arches all over the room. This practice is contemplated in the Obl . . . n: "I will not . . . unless in the presence and with the assistance of two or more R.A. Companions, OR . . . when acting as first Principal." In that action there is both the "consent and co-operation," of which they spoke to us as M.M.'s.

The M.E.Z. informs us that the Triune Essence of the Deity (which is something very different from the Trinity which Christians believe in) is illustrated by the Triple Tau, and this Triple Tau is also treated as a geometrical figure.

The *Tau* is referred to in *Ezekiel* (ix. 4) in terms that show that, in former times, it was a sign of acquittal; for in that book we find this charge: "Go through the midst of the City, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a *Tau* (A.V., *a mark*) upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry . . . slay utterly . . . but come not near any man upon whom is the *Tau*." Of course, our Ancient Brethren must have read their Bibles in Hebrew to see this.

It is true that "the Tau is derived from the Hebrew," being the name of the last letter of the Hebrew Alphabet. But this can only be a statement of the latter-day Companions. And two hundred years ago, or, for that matter, sixty years ago, the only meaning to be put on this statement was that the *word* or *name of the letter was Hebrew*. It could not have meant that the sign itself, the Tau, was a Hebrew symbol (though they naturally inferred it), because the Companions of that time did not know, as we do now, that the Hebrew *Tau* took the T-form; the last letter of the Alphabet, so far as they knew, had always been this \cap . And it was only by the discovery of ancient inscriptions in comparatively recent times, particularly the Moabite Stone, the oldest Hebrew inscription, that it could be positively affirmed that, in the days of Ezekiel and of Solomon, the *Tau* took the form of a cross, thus T and +, usually the first.

Nor must we think that the mystic idea conveyed by this the sign of acquittal or deliverance from an impending calamity was an invention of the R.A. Companions. For

an English author, Tyndale, writing in the beginning of the fifteenth century, mentions "the sign Thau that defendeth us from the smiting and power of the evil angels."

In Egypt they had the *ankh* or *crux ansata*, which took practically the same form as the Hebrew *Tau*, viz. †, and this was regarded as "a mark of life." Our Ancient Brethren seem to have known both symbols, and to have regarded the two, the *Tau* and the *Ankh*, as having "a nearly similar import."

This matter is worthy of study, because we think that the *Tau* is what led the Old Builder-Masons to adopt the *level* as a symbol of their Craft Lodges. They found that by inverting that Level they obtained a *Tau*; it was thus that they came to adopt the Level as the sign of an Installed Master. They would naturally notice that it contained two right angles or "squares."

In ancient times they also spoke of the *Tau* as a *Hiram*; and therefore the symbol $\begin{smallmatrix} \text{T} \\ \text{—} \end{smallmatrix}$, which some Masons used to say meant *Templum Hierosolyma*, might with propriety have been interpreted as meaning "the Triple Hiram." If the object of the Companions

in using such expressions was to conceal or disguise the allusion, either interpretation would have been equally suitable.

In a previous publication, *The Geometry of Freemasonry*, the writer has endeavoured to show how the Books of Euclid lie behind the Ceremonies of Craft Masonry. And the Kabbalists also made use of Euclid, transfiguring the symbols of Geometry, using them as the medium of moral and spiritual lessons and so making Geometry illustrative of their Speculative Science.

A Kabbalist teacher, Isaac bin Abraham bin Latif, or Allatif (born in 1270), sought to explain "the right way to the Sanctuary"—that is, to the symbolic *Sanctum Sanctorum*; and Dr Ginsburg says that in this he made use of geometrical forms which he said represented the self-revelation of God in the world of spirits.

But we cannot conceive that he was the first to do this, or that the geometrical method was exclusively his; though Dr Ginsburg informs us that after Allatif (who died in 1340) "the Kabbalists used points and lines in their mystical diagrams as much as they

employed the numerals and letters of their Alphabet."

Indeed, we know that Abraham bin Samuel Abulafia (who was a man of thirty when Allatif was born) was already expounding secrets by means of *gematria*, which means taking the value of letters as so many numerals. The word "*Gematria*" is a Rabbinical corruption of "Geometry," and this suggests that from ancient times the geometrical forms, as well as the numerals, were used as a means of expounding theological truth.

Nowadays, we all have become familiar with Euclid from a very early age; for his books are in the hands of every pupil of a secondary school. But this was not always so. In the Middle Ages, Euclid was only known to a favoured few, and then he could only be studied in Arabic, Greek, or Latin.

How did Euclid come into England? It was early in the twelfth century, between 1130-40. Adelard, or rather Æthelhard, an Orientalist of Bath, who had travelled far and wide, went to Spain, and there obtained a copy of his work in Arabic as a rare treasure. He brought it to England and translated it into Latin. The

first printed edition appeared in 1472; it has mistakenly been attributed to Campanus de Novara.

And as Adelard was a Christian and an Orientalist he would naturally meet with other Christians with a liking for Oriental things or who had acquired a knowledge of Oriental languages.

Let us remember that at that time the Moors were dominant in Spain, and they and the Jews were the most learned people in the world.

Of Adelard we know that he composed an Allegory (*which is still extant in MS.*), where two Deities dispute among them: *Philocosmia*, who is followed by the five foolish satisfactions—Fortune, Power, Dignity, Fame, and Pleasure; and *Philosophia*, who is attended by the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences. From this we must suppose that the Speculative Science of the Spanish Kabbalists would have appealed to him.

Although Adelard was a Christian he would have no difficulty in entering into relations with the Kabbalists of Spain, for they were by no means exclusive or orthodox Jews. Indeed,

they taught doctrines which were calculated to bring Jews and Christians and Mohammedans together. And we know that in the thirteenth century they imparted their "Science" to such Christians as had a liking for Hebrew studies, although in such cases the Kabbalistic system had to be much simplified to make it palatable or understandable to the Christian mind.

It cannot be mere coincidence that soon after the importation of Euclid into England we hear about "Freemasonry" in this country, and then we find it positively stated that "Freemasonry" *is* Geometry, the fifth of the Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Thereafter those people in England who found Geometry an attractive or helpful subject—the architects, the antiquarians, the members of philosophical bodies (like our own Royal Society), and other professional men—were drawn to the new Speculative Science, and in that way were considered eligible for that diluted form of Kabbalism which was evolved in this country and which soon became known by the name of "Freemasonry." Accordingly, all the early Masonic Documents now extant are unanimous in pro-

claiming Geometry as the foundation and essence of Speculative Freemasonry.

The *Matthew Cooke MS.* (A.D. 1400-30) says: "Among all ye craftys of ye worlde of mannes crafte masonry hath the moste notabilite and moste pte of ys science of Gemetry." And, again, concerning the secrecy to which every adept was then bound: "That he can hele the councell of his felows in Logge and in chambers and in evy place there as masons heth."

The *Regius MS.*, of about 1350, begins with these words: *Hic incipiunt constitutiones artis geometriæ secundum Euclydem.*

In some respects the secrecy of the early Masons was more stringent than that enjoined by the Kabbalists; for their "Geometry" was something that could not be divulged, whereas with the Kabbalists the science of Geometry was merely an auxiliary—a convenient means of illustrating their ideas.

The formula of the R.A. Masons' toasts reminds us of them. For they frequently referred to "the Point within a Circle." And we say: "Point . . . Triangle . . . Circle . . . 1, 2, 3, 4." The point referred to must be

the one in the centre, not merely the centre of the Triangle and Circle; but of everything: it is not simply the beginning of geometrical matter, but the symbol of T.T.A.L.G.M.H. The Triangle is also a type of the Deity, illustrative of His Triune Essence; while the Circle answers to the Sphere of the Universe, which is all around us. 1, 2, 3, 4 are the four directions on the compass, viz. E., W., N., and S.

In the Ceremonies Ex. Comp. J. calls our attention to the symbolical arrangements of the Lights. There is a Triangle of Light, with its three limbs representing the Sacred Word itself, and the Triune Essence of the Deity, and this is emblematical of three things—His creative, preservative, and annihilative powers.

The wonderful geometrical harmonies of the Triple Tau fully justify the importance which the R.A. Masons have always attached to it. Of old time it has been considered “the emblem of emblems,” but its significance comes from the fact that it illustrates the Mystery of the Three in One; for we definitely state that it corresponds to “the Grand Triune Deity.”

This correspondence of the Triple Tau to the Greater Triangle is demonstrated geometrically by dividing the latter into four other Triangles, when we obtain eight right angles, which equals the same number of right angles in the Triple Tau.

We are told that of old the Name of God used to be enclosed in triangular forms. Who cannot see here the allusion to the Sacred Symbol of the F.C., with "certain Hebrew characters" inserted therein?

In the midst of all our Lights, too, we find something which is highly esteemed, very precious, and full of meaning, viz. "a block of white marble . . . an Altar of Incense, a Double Cube." And with it there goes "that great, awful, tremendous, and incomprehensible Name of the M.H.," a Name which (*by the usual explanation given of it*) has, in itself, the proof of the truism that "He is what He was, was what He is, and ever shall remain both what He was and what He is from everlasting to everlasting."

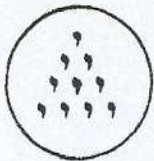
The Triangle of Light has its counterpart on a plate of pure gold; but while on the latter it is enclosed in a circle, the Greater Triangle

itself is conceived as surrounded by the Companions in the Chapter who at one time used to array themselves in a circle or semicircle round it. That circle is described variously as "an emblem of eternity," a representation of "the Sphere of the Universe," and "a type of God."

On the plate of gold there is an upright Triangle; a second Triangle is needed to form the Star and Seal of Solomon, but this is outside the Triangle of Light. The two form an antithesis, one pointing downwards the other upwards, the two being harmoniously interlaced.

In the Jewel worn by the Companions the combination of the two Triangles produces a Hexagon, and in the centre of that figure there is a third Triangle, an equilateral one. Formerly, behind this small Triangle was depicted a radiant Sun, which corresponded to the "Blazing Star" of the Craft Mason. There were then three Triangles, which were intended to remind us of the three O.'s invoked in opening the Chapters, which stand for three Beings, dominating the Universe and Eternity itself.

The Gnostics and other mystics of the Ancient East used the initials of the Divine Name, the Hebrew *Yod* (י) (the equivalent of the Greek *iota*), to form a "Mystical Triangle"; that is, they repeated that letter ten times, and arranged the *Yods* in pyramidal form, the

whole being enclosed in a circle, thus  .

This mystic symbol was attributed to Pythagoras, as most of the ancient symbols were.

We may note that there are four *Yods* on each of the three sides, suggesting the various Degrees: E.A., F.C., M.M., and R.A., and the four K.'s of the Royal Arch; while there is a fifth *Yod* in the centre, the number of the Craftsman who advances to the E. by 5 s . . . s. The total of the ten *Yods* here represents the Holy Tetraktys of Pythagoras; that is, the potential Decade, thus $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$.

We claim that the use of the Triangle as a symbol of divinity can be traced to the days of Bro. Pythagoras.

In Egypt there was also "the Sacred Delta" formed by the River Nile, which nourished the whole country and seemed to be a gift

of the Gods. The Delta was, of course, a Triangle.

The Thrice-greatest Hermes, writing in the third century, tells us that "Pythagoras had embellished both numbers and (*geometrical*) figures with appellations of the Gods." Thus, for example, they referred to the Equilateral Triangle as the *Athena Triangle*, and the three sides were named: *Apollo*, from privation of multitude and owing to the singleness of the monad; and *two* Strife and Daring, and *three* Justice, for as wronging and being wronged were according to deficiency or excess, so Justice was born of equality between them. Here we may note a similarity between the quaint statement of Hermes and the ideas suggested by the Three Pillars; for Apollo, being the founder of the Arts, suggests *Wisdom*; Strife and Daring signify *Strength*; and Justice or Righteousness is what we mean by *Benignity*, or *Beauty* of Character.

The same Hermes has an interesting reference to the Pythagorean Triangle—"a right-angled Triangle to the containing sides of which the values of 3 and 4 were given." The resulting hypotenuse was bound to be 5, as

we discover in the P.M.'s Jewel; that is, the 47th Proposition of Euclid. He connects this, therefore, with "the mysterious 60's of Clonbrotus," concerning which he has some doubts, and hazards this conjecture: "It may, however, be connected with Babylonian ideas; the 3 may have been regarded as falling into 4, so making 12, and this in its turn may have been regarded as falling into 5, and so making 60." In Babylon *Three* ruled heaven and earth and sea; 12 stood for the signs of the Zodiac, by which they regulated time; and 60, owing to the prevailing system of numeration, indicated Plenitude; the Babylonians counted by 60's.

Hermes informs us that the "Books of the Chaldeans"—that is, the literary works of Babylon—had been collected in the Alexandrian Library, and that they were translated into Greek. Here, then, was a golden bridge by which the ideas of ancient Babylon could have passed into the West, where the Kabbalists may have kept them alive. What a pity that all those works perished when the library was destroyed by fire!

With us the Equilateral Triangle is still

viewed as a symbol of the Triune Essence of the Deity. The representations of the Eternal Father by Roman Catholics often exhibits a radiant Triangle at the crown of the head. As the said Triangle is formed by three equal lengths put together, so we join the three divine Titles in one word, J.B.O., as indicating three co-equal Beings.

While the number Three is the root and foundation of everything, *Five*, the number of the Craftsman, is also conspicuous in R.A. Masonry. For there are five signs which are said to correspond, or to be parallel to, the 5 p. of f. of a M.M.; these are the Penal, the Reverential (or "*Hailing*"), the Penitential or Supplicatory, the Monitorial (*which embodies an* "Admonition"), and the Fiducial. But here, as compared with the Craft, there is a notable difference, for the 5 p. of f. indicate the manner in which we are expected to discharge our fraternal obligations; whereas the five s . . . s of the Royal Arch teach us how we are to act in view of "the relation we bear to the Almighty." Their meaning may be summed up thus: The first signifies our Doom, the second Resignation, the third

Supplication, the fourth Suffering, and the last Faith and Hope.

Again, the number 5 comes into prominence in the explanation of the geometrical symbols. For the device on the Jewel worn by the Companions forms by its intersections a given number of angles, and, taking these intersections in the five different ways possible, the sum of right angles in the several combinations respectively will be found to equal the five regular Platonic bodies. These Platonic bodies are declared to be emblems of "the four Elements and the Sphere of the Universe."

The number of Elements has not always been held to be four; at one time they were said to be three, at another five. Plato himself took these figures to represent the following elements:—

The Tetrahedron or Pyramid	.	Fire.
The Hexahedron or Cube	.	Earth.
The Octahedron	.	Air.
The Dodecahedron	.	Ether.
The Icosahedron	.	Water.

According to him the Soul of Nature combines the Ideal with Inert matter and produces the Phenomenal World in which we live.

In the Royal Arch we learn that our Greater Triangle may be geometrically divided into four smaller Triangles, three pointing up and one pointing down; the centre of this latter Triangle being also the centre of the Greater One. Both the Greater Triangle and the Circle surrounding it are concentric figures, and represent a connected whole.

The first of the regular Platonic bodies, the Tetrahedron, is a solid figure containing four triangles, all equal and equilateral. But the Four Triangles or Four Elements suggest the Holy Tethraktys of Bro. Pythagoras, which is the symbol of the Decade, for $1+2+3+4$ added together make 10, as already said.

But what can be the meaning of this *Ten* which is evolved out of *Four*? The Kabbalists found the answer ready at hand. For they were using the Hebrew system of numeration, and in that system the number *Ten* was expressed by the letter *Yod*, which was the initial of the Name of T.T.A.L.G.M.H., Y.H.W.H. That *Yod* was put in the centre of the Sphere of the Universe because they felt that that was the place corresponding to the M.H.

The Royal Arch is unquestionably derived from a Hebrew source, and therefore most of the difficulties we meet with can be solved by reference to the Hebrew speech, numerals, or script. The oldest Kabbalist book, the *Sepher Jetzirah*, is certainly founded on the Pythagorean notion of the creative power of numerals and letters, as well as speech.

That number, *Ten*, can also be obtained in another way. In the Jewel worn by the Companions, besides the symbol variously referred to as "The Three Triangles," or "The Triple Triangle," etc., there are six smaller Triangles at the extremities; in all nine Triangles, and these added to the Radiant Sun, which we imagine in the Centre (*which answers to the Altar*), or the Triple Tau by which we substitute it, gives us *Ten* as the total.

Again, in the Chapter our illumination is viewed as consisting of Six Lights, and these added to the Three Words, which the Greater Triangle typifies, gives us a total of nine; while, if we take into consideration the other symbol in the middle of the Lights, the result will be the same as before—*Ten*.

Counting the s . . . s taken by the Principals in going from W. to E. we find a total of ten. For, when they say O.O.O. at the first they move *three*, and afterwards *seven*, $3+7=10$.

The "Explanation of the Jewel," which forms an Appendix to the Ritual, shows the connection of the Triple Tau with the Triple Triangle; and it helps us to realise that the former is an essential factor in the Geometry of the Royal Arch, and not merely two letters, a T and an H, fortuitously thrown together. It is a geometrical *Clavis ad Thesaurum*.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ASTRONOMY OF THE ROYAL ARCH

ASTRONOMY is one of the Liberal Arts and Sciences which the Craftsmen are asked to study. It is the last and highest, and in the Craft there is much about the subject. Thus, one of the "Spherical Balls" with which the Twin Pillars were ornamented is said to have had "maps of the celestial sphere"; it was, in fact, a planisphere.

As we know, *Blue* has always been the distinguishing colour of Freemasonry generally, and this is because *Blue* points out the azure of the sky. On 17th March 1731 the Grand Lodge of London ordered that the Jewels of the Grand Master, his Deputy, and Wardens should be worn pendant to "Blue ribbons about their necks," and this was "to cure some irregularities," which phrase implies that Blue had always been considered the proper colour. This accords with the fact that the

Arch of the Vaulted Shrine has its counterpart in the Arch of Heaven, the Canopy of Celestial Blue above us.

In *The Apocalypse of Freemasonry* the writer has shown that the Ideal of the Mason is always that of "the Sun at its meridian." And those who have read that book will remember how the M.M. has to ascend the topmost Chamber of the Porch, there to behold the wonders of the midnight sky. In the grand panorama which unfolds itself before his eyes he can study the last of the Liberal Arts and Sciences, as he promised to do.

Moreover, those who read that book saw how what Astronomy reveals to the M.M. will one day have to be supplemented with what he finds in the depths below. The Glorious Luminary of Nature "regularly diffuses Light and Lustre to all within its Circle"; but one day, when the same M.M. comes to find himself in the right relation to the Sun of his spirit, he will be able to perceive many things which before were dark and enigmatic—things that were but imperfectly discerned. It is the longing for this perfect illumination that makes

him turn to the E. in his appeals to the Deity.

In Craft Masonry we hear of an astronomical Circle called "the Border." Its astronomical character cannot be denied because the Initiate is distinctly told that "it refers us to the planets which in their revolutions form a beautiful border or skirtwork round the Sun." Really and truly this border was once a "Zodiac," although we have almost lost sight of the fact. Nowadays, most people imagine the Sun to be fixed and immovable, but in ancient times it was generally viewed as the typical Traveller because of its apparent movement round the earth; and the Zodiac gives us its Itinerary in the course of a year.

It may appear that the Royal Arch has little or nothing to do with the Science of Astronomy. But it has, and we shall presently see that J.B.O. is not so much a mystic Name as an astronomical formula which has come down to us from ancient Babylon. The explanation of this fact will occupy a whole chapter, and we do not think we should anticipate.

The Zodiac is still with us in the Royal Arch, although, like "the Border" of the Craftsman

and like so many other symbols of Freemasonry, its real import and significance has been obscured. Indeed, we would suggest a conundrum, *Where is the Zodiac?* According to the old Ritual, the Companions formed a Circle, sometimes a semicircle, around the emblematical Lights of the Sacred Shrine: it was in that way that they symbolised the Astronomical Circle; that is, "the Border." And in former days, too, in the background of the Triple Triangle there used to be depicted a "Radiant Sun," which, having been adopted as a symbol of Craft Masonry, came to be known as "the Blazing Star"; although even to the Initiate we say plainly that he must not think of a Star but of the Sun.

In 1775, when the Freemasons' Hall was erected, the Zodiac was acknowledged to be a Masonic Symbol by placing it over the main entrance of that edifice. The Masons who erected that noble pile left their testimony on this point in the stone carvings which we see at present. But the references to the Border contained in the Ritual are much older than the Freemasons' Hall.

Nowadays it is still customary for the Com-

panions to range themselves round about the twelve "ensigns." (Compare with this custom the phrase found in the Initiation Ceremony "Among the thousands who range under our Banners," which implies that originally some "Banners" were used in the Masonic Ceremonies.) The etymology of the word "ensign" is "*in*" and "*signum*"; that is, something on which a "sign" has been inscribed. The twelve signs on our staves represent as many constellations in the midnight sky; and these signs were originally those of the Zodiac or substitutes for those of the Zodiac.

Those pictorial devices are now stated in our Ritual to be "the distinctive bearings of the twelve tribes of Israel," and to be figurative of the peculiar blessings bequeathed to each by the Patriarch Jacob on his death-bed. Nothing is said of their being astronomical signs, but there is more in this than meets the eye at a first glance.

The Zodiac originated in Babylon at a very remote age. It was in existence as early as 3000 B.C. At that remote time the starry heavens were divided into three regions, over which the three chief deities were said to pre-


side. And each month of the year, that is, each division of the Zodiac, had also its patron deity. One writer says that the region over which *Anu* (the first of the Three Chief Gods) presided included the four signs, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo; that belonging to *Bel* (the second of those Gods) included Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius; and that of *Ea* (the third God) had the remainder, Capricornus, Aquarius, Pisces, Aries.

But Prof. Hommel's view is that the domains of Anu, Bel, and Ea corresponded to "the thirds of the Ecliptic," this Ecliptic being the path of the Sun through the Zodiac. According to him, the region ruled by Anu comprised three signs, from Taurus to Cancer inclusive; that under the influence of Bel, four signs, from Leo to Scorpio; and that subject to Ea, five signs, from Sagittarius to Aries. This would have the effect of distributing the twelve signs thus: three to Anu, four to Bel, and five to Ea, which is reminiscent of the Pythagorean Triangle.

Diodorus Siculus (ii. 30), in his account of the Babylonian astronomy, tells us that the Rulers of the Gods were Twelve in number, to

each of whom was allotted a month with one of the signs of the Zodiac.

This prompted Gunkel to make the following comment: "There must be a line leading from the twelve Babylonian Zodiac gods to the twelve tribes of Israel, but of what nature or how long the line is cannot at present be said."

It is an unquestionable fact that in Babylon the planisphere was divided into three separate regions, over which the three principal deities of the Babylonian pantheon presided. The result was something like this: . And it is most probable that the mystic sign called Triskelion, which takes the form of a Y, arose from that way of dividing the celestial sphere into three regions; if so, we should have to say that the Triskelion has a reference to "the heavens in revolution," as the Craftsmen say of "the Border" or Zodiac.

The Isle of Man has adopted the Triskelion and placed it on its coat-of-arms; but in that case the three limbs of the symbol have become three human legs, which are supposed to be in motion as the legs of a traveller are.

The conception of three celestial regions presided over by three Deities was reflected in

the views of the Kabbalists, who also acknowledged Three Principal Powers, or Energies, the first Three Sephiroth, as paramount Potentialities in the Universe. Accordingly they represented these Three as Pillars or Supports, and they originated our symbol of Three Triangles enclosed in a Circle, this latter representing *En Soph*, "the Boundless One," or Absolute Deity.

We now justify the use of the Circle as a symbol of Deity by saying that, "as the Circle is without beginning or end, it may justly be deemed a type of God." And that was also the view which the Kabbalists took of it. But at one time the R.A. Masons used to say of the Circle that it was a symbol of God, because "its Centre was everywhere and its circumference nowhere."

Historically (*and also metaphysically*) the secrets of the Royal Arch have reference to a "Centre," for they are to be found in a subterranean place of the Second or Sacred Lodge, which is centrally situated. The F.C.'s say "In the Centre of the Building," without knowing what it means. The exact location is to be determined by certain land-

marks on the surface; for, first of all, we have to ascertain "where the first (*Temple*) formerly stood," and then "the very Centre of the ground on which the Sanctuary . . . was afterwards erected." Having obtained these data, following this clue, we come to the crown of the vault, and soon after discover "that which was lost."

As M.M.'s we said that we hoped to find it "*with* the centre," but the expression was not clear; we did not know it meant guided by a certain centre and taking our bearings from it. But at last the spot was found, and it was then that we discovered the secret of the Three; that is, not merely the record of the Grand Masters who presided at the building of K.S.T., but the mystery of the creation of the Universe and the Triune Essence of the Deity.

We shall presently deal with the names of the Deities who presided over the three regions, *Anu*, *Bel*, *Ea*, and we shall then see that they are no strangers to the Chapter, although they are given out in such a way that they have hitherto been unrecognised; and these Names will be found to have an astronomised import.

In the volume of the S.L. only four of the Banners of the Tribes of Israel are expressly referred to, viz. "the leading standards of the four divisions of the army of Israel," which were the Banners corresponding to Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan. These four had their places assigned to them at the E., W., N., and S. of the Camp. The Jerusalem Targum says that they were made of silk of three colours, and that they had a device upon them under the form of a Lion, a Stag, a Man, and a *Cerastes* or Horned Viper.

These devices are still recognisable in those we mention in the Chapter: the Stag was meant for *Taurus*, "the Ox"; the Man was "*Aquarius*"; the *Cerastes* seems to have been the traditional sign, for the bright star *Sirius* α in the constellation *Scorpio* is called in Arabic *Al Hai*, which means "the Reptile." But the *Cerastes* was replaced by "an Eagle," because the Eagle was supposed to have vanquished that Reptile, "the Viper." The Lion was *Leo*, "the Lion of the Tribe of Judah."

Every Tribe, however, had its own standard, but it is now difficult to identify the devices of the various tribes as signs of the Zodiac,

because they are not expressly named, and writers differ in their statements.

The *Jewish Encyclopædia* has the following observations: "The twelve constellations represent the Twelve Tribes. . . . The standards correspond to the zodiacal signs of the constellations, so that in the East was the standard of Judah, with Issachar and Zabulun beside it, these three being opposite Aries, Taurus, and Gemini; in the South was the standard of Reuben, with Simeon and Gad, opposite Cancer, Leo, and Virgo; in the West was the standard of Ephraim, with Manasses and Benjamin, opposite Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius; and in the North was the standard of Dan, with Asher and Nephtali, opposite Capricornus, Aquarius, and Pisces."

In Jacob's Blessing there seem to be allusions to these signs, as if he had a mental picture before him while he spoke. But these allusions do not always tally with the distribution usually made.

Levi, not going into battle, would have no standard at all, and therefore no sign, but possibly Simeon was coupled with Levi as "the Twins," *Gemini*, for we read: "Simeon

and Levi are brethren . . ."; it proceeds thus: "Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations"; and we know that *Gog and Magog* (a representation of *Gemini*) held a spear and a club in their hands.

Judah is well described as "a Lion's whelp," suggesting *Leo*, "the Lion." Zebulun "shall be a haven of ships," suggesting *Cancer*, "the Crab."

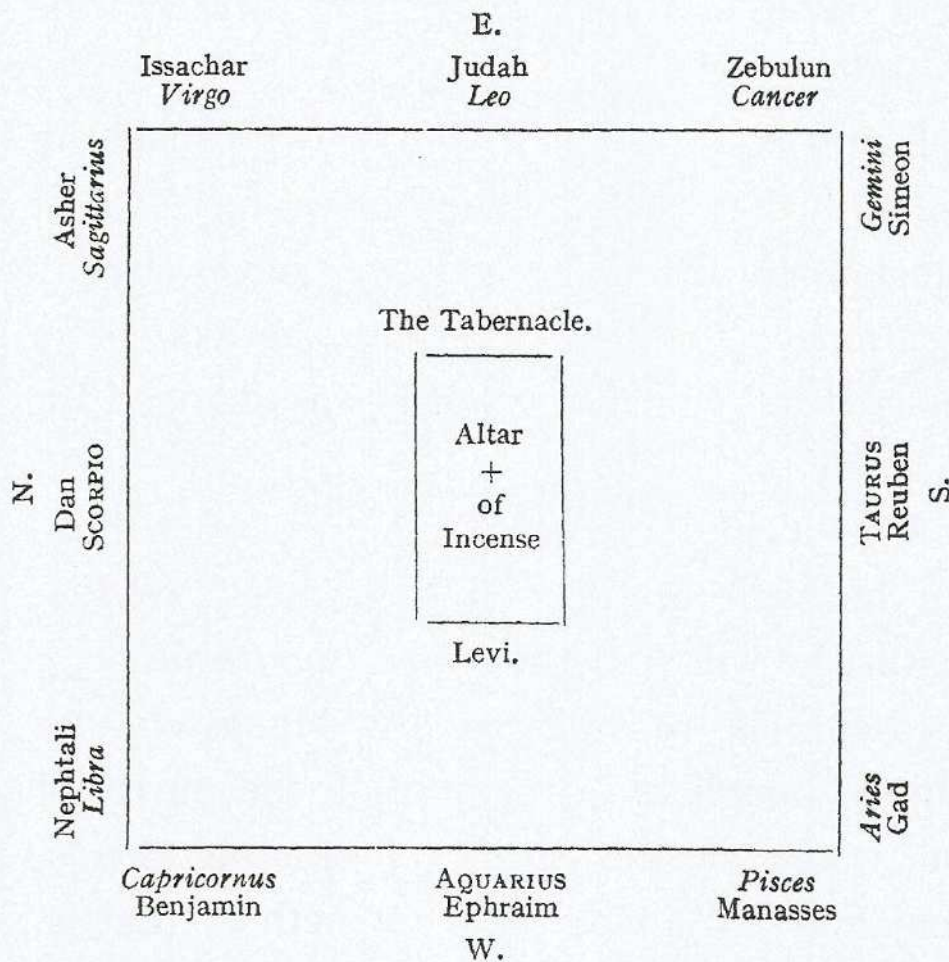
Dan was to be "an adder (or whipsnake) in the path that biteth at the horses' feet"; a fit allusion to *Scorpio*; and we have already mentioned that the Targum speaks of a "Cerastes," which afterwards was changed for an Eagle.

As to Gad, "a troop shall press upon him, but he shall press upon their heel" (*R.V.*); that is, he will show fight like *Sagittarius*.

Joseph is represented by Manasseh, "a fruitful bough by a fountain"; the purity of the water at the spring suggesting *Virgo*. Benjamin is "a wolf that ravineth"; that is, *Aries*, "the Ram."

The usual order in which we now name the signs of the Zodiac is this: *Aries*, *Taurus*, *Gemini*, *Cancer*, *Leo*, *Virgo*, *Libra*, *Scorpio*,

Sagittarius, Capricornus, *Aquarius*, Pisces. Aries was considered to open the spring about 21st March. But in the camp of the Israelites Aries would seem to have had its place in the S.W. We submit the following diagram as giving the most probable distribution of the Signs among the Tribes.



The leading standards are referred to by Ezekiel when he describes the vision he had of the four "Living Creatures"; these pre-

sented the human form, but their faces were different: one had that of a Man, another that of a Lion, another that of a Bull, and another that of an Eagle. They symbolise Intelligence, Royal Dignity and Power, Patient Strength, and Exalted Vision and Celerity in Flight. These Living Creatures stood facing inwards towards the Centre; that is to say, towards the Sanctuary or Shrine.

Scholars often note correspondences between Freemasonry and the ancient Religions. We cannot follow them in that direction, but it is remarkable that in Mithraism the first four of its Seven Degrees had names in Greek and Latin which suggest these same Living Creatures or devices on the four leading standards of the Chapter; while the quarters of the globe with which they are associated is also in accord with the practice of Israel; their names were:

- | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---------------------|---|---|-----------------------|
| (1) Korax, | . | Raven, | . | . | Eagle on the N. |
| (2) Griphius, | . | Griffin, or Querub, | . | . | Ox on the S. |
| (3) Miles, | . | Soldier, | . | . | Waterman on
the W. |
| (4) Leo, | . | Lion | . | . | Lion on the E. |

The ground-plan of the Temple was a

Parallelogram, and the Middle Chamber presented the form of a Parallelepipedon, or Double Cube; and in the R.A. Chapter the ensigns are also arranged so as to suggest those things. The *Sanctum Sanctorum* was at the furthest end of the long building.

The idea of the astronomical Circle, or Zodiac, is reflected by the mystic word *Abraxas*, once used in the Ceremonies, but now corrupted (we think) into *A—b—h*, which in the Ritual is said to signify “the Soul of Nature.” The ending *-oth* is the Hebrew plural, but we have not been able to identify the word with anything in the Hebrew language.

“Abraxas” is a made-up word, which consists of seven letters; and taking the numerical value of these letters in Greek will be found to yield the formula of the Solar year, thus:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \alpha & \beta & \rho & \alpha & \xi & \alpha & \varsigma \\ 1 & -2 & -100 & -1 & -60 & +1 & +200 = 365 \end{array}$$

Accordingly this word was a cryptogram which, like the Zodiac, was intended to convey the idea of the Sun moving among the planets and performing its annual journey or circumambulation of the heavens, from constellation

to constellation, from sign to sign. It was in that way that the Glorious Luminary suggested some of the ordeals which the Craft Mason has to go through in the Degrees of probation, before he is admitted into the Royal Arch.

In the First T.B. used in the Craft there appear Seven Stars, which are said to have an allusion to the Seven Masons of "the Perfect Lodge"; and in *The Apocalypse of Freemasonry* the writer has already shown how well this idea of a Perfect Lodge fits into the case of the constellation *Ursa Minor* on account of both its composition and its movement. For there we see Seven Stars describing a Circle; *Polaris* at the extremity becoming thereby the Master-star around which the whole of the heavens revolve; it marks the centre of the Planisphere.

And there is a second Constellation, *Ursa Major*, which gives us the idea of "Emulation" by its similarity of form and regularity of motion; for with Masons, "Emulation" has always been understood to be the essence of perfect obedience to a Central Power.

Now, adding together these two constellations, we get a total of Fourteen Stars, which tallies with an important feature of the Royal

Arch; that is, the fourteen Pillars or Supports of the Vaulted Chamber, two "of exquisite design and workmanship," and twelve "of equal symmetry and beauty." It also tallies with the Fourteen Letters which originally appeared on the A . . . r, viz. the Four-Lettered Name YHWH, with the well-known trilateral symbol *Aleph*, *Beth*, *Lamed*, and the seven letters of J.B.O.; for, written in Hebrew, it took seven characters, as already stated.

This wonderful correspondence of astronomical ideas with our letters, words, numbers, emblems, and architectural ornaments show plainly what intense students of Nature our Ancient Brethren must have been.

CHAPTER IX

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE ROYAL ARCH

WOODFORD, the well-known author of a Masonic *Cyclopædia*, writing in 1867 under the pseudonym of "Masonic Student," made the following observation: "Despite Bro. Hughan's strong expression of opinion, I venture to express my firm belief, on very strong grounds of evidence, that the Royal Arch Degree is far more ancient than 1740."

Woodford is such a solid writer that we cannot but bow to his "firm belief." He alleged that there was "numismatic evidence of the second part of the Third Degree, co-equal with the operative Lodge of York Masons, certainly in the Fifteenth century." This means that he had seen ancient medals which testified to the antiquity of the essential part of our Royal Arch, which in the fifteenth century was part of the Third Degree. We must regret that he did not give details, but

the question turns on the credibility of his statement.

The same Woodford affirms in his *Cyclopædia* that the main idea in the secrets of the Royal Arch has remained the same as it is now, viz. the finding of the V.S.L. and all that goes with it; things that had remained hidden in a certain place for several centuries. The names of the protagonists of the story are immaterial; this point has already been discussed.

Here we may add the testimony of Bro. R. H. Baxter in an excellent paper which he contributed to the *Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge* (1918), in which he said: "So far as the Royal Arch is concerned there is a certain amount of evidence, apart from the alleged Ritual of 1740, in the Library of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, that it was cut off from the M.M. Degree at a comparatively recent date, *i.e.* the plate from *L'Ordre des Franc-maçons Trahi*" (*A.Q.C.*, xxix. 256).

On the other hand, Companion Dr Stokes is of opinion that our present Ritual is altogether too modern "to be received with implicit credence as a Ceremony practised by the

Confraternities of the Middle Ages.” Many will agree with this view, for it is plausible enough; but what if behind this “modern” Ritual of ours there be an older one not so modern, or so incongruous, bearing out the theory which he rejects, and which we advocate?

Bro. W. L. Wilmshurst, in his book *The Masonic Initiation*, has a footnote (p. 201) where he says that “Royal Arch Masonry was introduced into England in 1788 by a Jewish Brother, Moses Michæl Hay.”

Here, alas, there is a jumble of ideas; but with a foundation of truth. The reference is to Bro. Michæl Hayes, who about 1780 (others say 1777) is said to have introduced the Degree into the United States; in England it had been in existence for a long time. In 1788 he was made Provincial Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge (*Scottish Constitution*) at Boston, which may explain the confusion as to the date in the first statement by Bro. Wilmshurst. What probably happened in 1788 was that the new Grand Master at Boston granted official recognition to the R.A. Ritual.

Presumably this old American Ritual was

the one which Bro. Hayes himself had brought to America when he came in 1777, which was practised in England and Scotland at that time. It was a decidedly Jewish Ritual ; that is to say, Kabbalistic, a Ritual about which we shall have something to say.

Oliver *suspects* that the method of advancing in the Chapter was an innovation due to this same Jewish Brother, when in England, before 1777. But it is far more likely that he, being a Jew, and therefore better instructed than most Masons, may have pointed out to the Companions the regularity of this, when visiting some slovenly Chapters where the traditional practice had fallen into disuse or was habitually neglected.

We propose to prove that the Mystic Rites of the Royal Arch are really ancient, and we shall proceed to do so forthwith. The essentials of our Supreme Degree are four, viz.:

- (1) The Sacred Word;
- (2) The Hebrew characters on the Altar;
- (3) The Vaulted Shrine;
- (4) The Triple Tau.

If we can establish the antiquity of these

things, if we can prove that they have been handed down to us from a very distant past, we shall feel that our task has been successfully accomplished.

(1) THE OMNIFIC WORD

The Sacred Word will require a separate chapter, where we hope to show that it is derived from ancient Babylon.

We know that the Hebrew equivalent for it, the Tetragrammaton, is as old as Moses. The Omnific Word itself is still older.

(2) ALEPH, BETH, LAMED

We shall also give a separate chapter to this trilateral Symbol—*Aleph, Beth, Lamed*,—and we shall demonstrate that these letters have a *raison d'être*. There is nothing arbitrary about them.

There is a Mahommedan tradition, at least a thousand years old, which says that some people had a Secret Name for the Deity which had wonderful properties and powers; but the only way to obtain the knowledge of it was by going into the Mysteries of the *Ism Abba*, “the Name *Abba*.” *Abba* was not the Sacred Name,

but only the clue to it; and the so-called "Mysteries" were referred to in that way because *Abla* was another secret which no one could fathom.

Oliver refers to this, but could not see that *Abla* is simply *Aleph, Beth, Lamed*. Evidently these mystic letters were used to explain the Secret Name to the Candidates.

Lane has an anecdote which illustrates the power of this name. Two rebel messengers of God were confined in the subterranean caverns which exist among the ruins of Babylon, because of their unfaithfulness. Majahid was allowed to visit them in their confinement under the guidance of a Jew, who particularly cautioned him not to mention that secret Name of God in their presence; but he did, and the rebel angels were so violently agitated that they almost broke their fetters, and Majahid and the Jew had to flee for their lives.

Now, through this delightful fancy, we may perceive some truths which recall what we learn in the Royal Arch. The Jew knows all about the Secret Name of God; the Moslem has him for guide and instructor; and that Name has to do with a subterranean place and

some ruined Temple that was waiting to be rebuilt.

(3) THE VAULT

That the traditional history of our Ritual is not a new-fangled thing may be gathered from what Philostorgius wrote about the year A.D. 364 in his *Ecclesiastical History*, and which Nicephorus repeats:

At the clearing up of the ground on Mount Moriah, when Julian the Apostate made an attempt to rebuild the Temple, he says, a stone slipped from its place, and in so doing there was exposed the mouth of a deep cutting or well sunk in the rock; then one of the workmen was let down by a cord fastened round his waist, and on reaching the bottom he was up to his ankles in water. An examination of the place proved it to be four-square; and he met with a certain small column emerging above the water, on which lay a book wrapped in a linen cloth. The workman was then drawn up, bringing the book with him, which on examination was found to begin with these words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Such was the legend when Philostorgius heard of it nearly 1600 years ago. "The Word," or *Logos*, mentioned in the book discovered by the said workman, is but another name for the "Wisdom" of the M.H. And it is remarkable that Philostorgius does not jump to the conclusion that the book in question must have been the Gospel of St John, which happens to begin with those words, as we might have done nowadays. How, forsooth, could it be the Gospel of St John, seeing that the book found must have been in "the cutting" from a very remote date, possibly since the erection of the Second Temple, and therefore some 500 years before St John wrote? Indeed, if the story be true, the opposite should follow; that is, St John must have put in the forefront of his Gospel an ancient text, the words which were once found in that Vault beneath the Temple by the nameless workman.

Of course we are at liberty to regard this story as apocryphal; but we have no reason for so doing. And if we do this, we shall still have to admit the high antiquity of the legend, for, as we said, Philostorgius recorded it 1600 years ago. We may question its historicity,

and put it down as fiction, but in any case we have proved that the story did not originate with the Masons of the eighteenth century, who probably knew nothing of Philostorgius. Those Masons perpetuated a similar tale, but they had received it independently of Philostorgius, for it was handed down to them by word of mouth. Therefore, as there is collateral evidence, it must be true. We only rehearse the legend to explain the recovery of something which we esteem of great consequence to us.

And here we might ask: Whence could St John have derived his idea of the *Logos*, "the Word"? It was not an original idea of his, for it was used long before his time. It occurs in the Targums, the Paraphrases of the Hebrew Scriptures, where it becomes the *Memra* of God, which is Aramaic.

In the Old Testament the "Word" was the Wisdom of God personified, which was conceived as an instrument for executing the Divine Will.

Philo, in the beginning of the Christian era, seemed to regard this "Word" as an intermediate Power or Agency between Absolute

Deity and ourselves, His human creatures. Therefore, it is at least permissible to suppose that St John in his Gospel made use of an ancient text, as we have suggested.

The Vault under the Temple seems to be a point of contact between the Royal Arch and the Builder-Masons. For in every cathedral there was a "Crypt," a word derived from the Greek, which means "a hidden place." Of old it was a place used for sepulture, and also for special assemblies, not public ones. They were provided with altars and fittings requisite for religious services. They were usually immediately beneath the most sacred part of the church, the main Altar and the Choir.

(4) THE TRIPLE TAU

Now about the Triple Tau. Companion Stokes says that before 1825 this symbol is never mentioned. He has evidently overlooked the account we have (*A.Q.C.*, xxvii. p. 144) of a Certificate extended to Bro. Robert Partridge as a member of the Royal Arch. It bears the date "23rd February A.L. 5780 A.D. 1786," and has the Triple Tau against the signatures of the Three Principals. Then

there is the Warrant of St Michæl's Chapter, No. 24, Chester, dated 9th February 1781, which is dedicated to "the Almighty *Jah* ⌒ ." An old Jewel which belonged to this Chapter is also worth mentioning as having a mitre upon it on which is inscribed the motto of the Royal Arch, *Holiness to the Lord*. This mitre suggests the primacy of the High Priest, as in the old American Ritual.

So this is nearly fifty years earlier than the date given by Companion Stokes! In the Certificate just mentioned Craft Masonry is called "the Royal Craft," and the greeting of "Health, Peace, and Goodwill" is addressed "To all the Enlightened Brethren of the several Degrees of the Royal Craft; but more especially those Citizens of the World and Servants of the Omnipotent, who have been, or hereafter may be honor'd by Exaltation, etc."

The argument *a silentio* is always most unsafe, and can never be conclusive in Freemasonry. Indeed, with us not only is *silence* the rule, but we deliberately conceal things, and we even frequently give a false scent to the Cowans. Nevertheless we cannot deny that formerly the symbol ⌒^T was used for the


Triple Tau, and that sometimes it was referred to as if it was meant for the initials of *Templum Hierosolyma*, "The Temple of Jerusalem." Yet, was not this a very clever ruse, and a very effective means of concealing the nature of the symbol which the Companions had in mind? Our Ancient Brethren were most resourceful in camouflaging their secrets; and therefore what they *said* cannot always be taken as final.

But, unquestionably, the Royal Arch Masons have always used the *Tau* as a symbol; and, seeing the general character of the Royal Arch, we should expect to find it triplicated, just as everything else is triplicated. It was thus that the Triple Tau, or, what is the same thing, "the Three Taus," did sometimes take the form of the letters τ .

In Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, under the word *Cross*, we read: "The use of the Tau, patibulary, or Egyptian Cross, is general from perhaps the earliest period . . . it is beyond doubt a pre-Christian symbol."

The "Potent Cross," or "Cross of Jerusalem," was acknowledged to be made up of four Taus, thus τ ; and the Triple Tau (not being a perfect cross) must be a pre-Christian symbol,

like the single Tau itself. It certainly preceded, and is older than, the so-called "Potent Cross of Jerusalem."

The symbol was a recognised mystic one, of very deep significance, at the close of the first century or the beginning of the second; for St Barnabas in his Epistle General, wanting to make it subservient to the Christian cause, indulges in a bit of *gematria*. He is talking of the number of Abraham's household, viz. 318, and he sees something mysterious in it. The 18, he says, are represented by I and H, which he regards as the initial of the ineffable Name of *Ιησους*, or of YHWH plus H, which is the second letter of the name. In the Greek system of numeration I stood for 10, and H for 8. Then, he adds, there is the addition of 300 by "His Cross," and this is mounted on the *eta*, the letter H, thus I . He speaks of this as if it were a secret of the Instituted Mysteries in his time, which some of those to whom his Epistle was addressed would understand; and something that demands a certain reticence.

We have shown that the chief elements of

the Royal Arch, the letters on the Altar, the Vault, and the Triple Tau, are really ancient. Therefore we have done all that we undertook to do.

Now, however, some of our readers may want to know what the original Degree was like; how it was worked, and who worked it. This is a more difficult problem, and must be a matter of conjecture. But we may follow the line indicated by a few scanty clues that are at hand, and infer a few things. In so doing, however, we shall have to exercise extreme caution, as otherwise it would be easy to go astray.

It cannot be denied that our Ancient Brethren (which in the language of Freemasons means our *predecessors* in the Speculative Science), "our holy ancestors," as the M.E.Z. calls them, were thoroughly steeped in Old Testament lore; and it is from that source that they drew most of their legends. This much is perfectly evident.

Now we know positively that in the meetings held by the Kabbalists it was customary to teach the novices by rehearsing the principal episodes of Sacred History, singling out those

which were illustrative of their tenets. And in doing this they did not merely imagine the worthies of the past to be speaking to them; they had certain Companions that personated them; the various characters in each scene, from Adam downwards, were supposed to be present.

Probably it was thus that the custom of giving symbolic names to the members of Masonic Lodges originated. This custom (which still obtains in some foreign Lodges) has been discussed in *The Apocalypse of Freemasonry*.

The rehearsals of the Kabbalists were decidedly "in a dramatic form." According to a dissertation entitled *Raja Mehemna*, or *The Faithful Shepherd*, Moses and Elias in one scene hold a conference with Rabbi Simon bin Jochai; he is called "the Sacred Light," who occupies the position of W.M., and it is said that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Aaron, David, Solomon, and God Himself are present. The disciples go into ecstasies as they witness the performance, in which they see the patriarchs and kings of a bygone age imparting their wisdom to their Master.

As already observed, theorising is dangerous, but of course there must have been an Initiatory Rite from the earliest times. The story of the creation at the forefront of the V.S.L., and particularly the words there used, *Let there be Light*, must have suggested something that was "an emblematical representation of the entrance of all men on this their mortal existence," when for the first time they saw the light of day.

The creation of the Light comes in both in the Royal Arch and in Craft Masonry; and the Kabbalistic work, *Sepher-ha-Zohar*, was a disquisition on the words *Let there be Light*.

There must have been something to remind the Initiate of the three Jubals, presumably Three Principals, or Rulers.

There must also have been an Illumination, that is, the communication of secrets, to distinguish the physical from the spiritual Light. Perhaps the story of the Burning Bush was rehearsed in this Ceremony, Moses becoming typical of the Candidate, when "certain Hebrew characters" depicted in the centre of the Star and Seal of Solomon (the National emblem of Israel) were laid before him.

Presumably they had a representation of the

Tabernacle, with some Companions personating Moses, Aholiab, and Bezaleel ; that is, three men who were deputed to act the parts of those worthies.

Then there would follow various other episodes, allegorical tableaux, more or less dramatic, such as that of Jephta, the renowned Gileaditish leader and the army of Ephraimites, whose conflict originated the P.W. we know of, for we still rehearse this now; the story of Boaz and David, the latter becoming "a Prince and Ruler in Israel"; and chiefly the building of K.S.T. as "a House for my Name."

Perhaps there would be a grouping of the various historic characters by threes; for instance, *Eli*, *Samuel*, and *Saul* would go together. The first and last could not be commended; but Samuel was God's "Elect," who said: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." He made a great mistake in anointing Saul to be King. Guided by that Wisdom which is from above, he had recognised David as the providential man, and had anointed him as King; in so doing he passed by the other seven sons of Boaz.

Boaz, *David*, and *Solomon* would also go

together; they were grandfather, father, and son respectively, but they did not constitute a Grand Original.

In the next scene there would appear the Three Grand Masters who presided at the construction of the noble edifice, K.S.T. Then there would come the acting of a great tragedy, the slaying of our M., H.A., not recorded anywhere, but traditional. We have seen that there is some evidence for this tragedy having been enacted by the Kabbalists. The Winding Staircase must also have been mentioned here.

In some scene there must have appeared "the Chair of King Solomon"; that is to say, his magnificent Throne, "Solomon in all his glory," which the Jews loved to magnify. And the right to personate the Regent of the Secret Tradition would be regarded as a great privilege by the members of the Society.

The representative of our M., H.A., would be made to go through the three transmigrations, which the Kabbalists believed in; the first and second proving mere failures, "a slip," while at the third he was raised and ushered into the Light Supernal, to join the

former "Companions" of his toils, Abraham, Moses, Solomon, and the rest of them, who were personated by some of those present, welcoming the Candidate.

Probably there was a scene about the completion, and another about the dedication of K.S.T., with J., the Assistant High Priest, officiating, this also being extra-canonical. Now, the Volume of the S.L. would be deposited "in a safe repository."

Then there would follow the repairing of the Temple in the days of King Josiah, the finding of the foundation-deposit, and the re-formation that ensued.

Next, the destruction of Jerusalem, and later the return of the exiles from the Babylonian Captivity; "the Masons from Babylon" preparing the ground for the foundation of the Second Temple, where the worship of Jehovah was to be restored; and the recovery by those men of certain lost secrets under Z., H., and J. Here, of course, our story of the Vault would come in.

In modern Freemasonry we still have the cast of characters, but, with the exception of three or four dramatic scenes, we do very

little acting. Still, the preliminary questionnaire of the Grand Master in a Grand Lodge tells volumes: "Bro. So-and-so, whom do you represent?" It is a question that takes us back to a very distant past.

In the great changes that have taken place in Freemasonry generally, these stories or legends have been redistributed among the various Degrees; some have been discarded, some others have been substituted. Some simplified, others altered. The ceremonial has been changed again and again; and the process of evolution has not been the same everywhere; hence the variety of Rituals; in Ireland, for instance, the episode of Josiah's reign has been retained, while that of the rebuilding has been left out; on the other hand, in England the opposite has happened.

CHAPTER X

THE MYSTERY OF ALEPH, BETH, LAMED

THE explanation supplied of the Hebrew characters depicted on the face of the A . . . r is far from being, as it professes to be, "the best that can be given." Indeed, it is often inaccurate, faulty, and at best only partially true. It does not enlighten us very much, although it serves its purpose, which is to illustrate, by whatever means are available, the aims of the R.A. Degree.

Still, if we want to be taken seriously, if we desire to attract intellectual people, if we would command the respect of those scholars who come amongst us, things ought to be put right; the Symbolical and Mystical Lectures, which are the backbone of the Ritual, should be recast and made to conform to the facts.

Over our so-called "Column," or P . . . , there appear three groups of letters: first, the A.B.L.; then the Hebrew Name of the M.H.;

and lastly, the Sacred Word. This last is extremely ancient, justifying all that is said about the antiquity of Freemasonry; indeed, it is much older than the Hebrew race itself.

Dermott, Dunckerly, Ramsay, and all the great Royal Arch Masons of the eighteenth century realised fully the fact that it was something prehistoric and unintelligible to the world at large. We submit that it was utterly impossible for them to have invented it, and that they were incapable of declaring its real meaning; for it belonged to a dead language which was not then understood, and written in a script which was not decipherable.

Nevertheless, those who had been initiated into the Mysteries of the Kabbalah had some idea of what it referred to, and the Freemasons had inherited this knowledge. Nowadays, however, we might safely challenge our cleverest Masonic scholars (as the writer has already done) to tell us whence either this Sacred Word or the letters A.B.L. have come from. They simply do not know. We shall proceed to elucidate this double problem.

Why the *Aleph*, *Beth*, *Lamed* were singled out of the Hebrew alphabet, or what they are

meant to stand for, apart from those playful, forced, and ungrammatical combinations in which we indulge, seems to be a mystery. Most certainly, if an Englishman had fabricated the Royal Arch he would never have selected those characters for illustrating his ideas, for, not being familiar with either the language or its script, he would have felt that it was too difficult to memorise the words formed with them. Besides, he would have regarded them as serving no practical purpose.

The Masons of 200 years ago, however, had no choice in the matter. They found them in use, and of course they retained them along with the rest of the Hebrew element in the Royal Arch. The few of them who knew Hebrew must have found the three characters an embarrassing and irksome feature; they took pains to unravel the problem, and in the effort to clear up things they made many orthographical mistakes, but in spite of everything the result was unsatisfactory: most of the Companions must feel cold and unsated when that part of the Ritual is being rehearsed.

There must, therefore, have been a reason for placing the *Aleph*, *Beth*, *Lamed* at the fore-

front of their symbolism. Even now the M.E.Z. declares that they are "of exceeding importance." We ought, therefore, to inquire what that reason was. We state that they were adopted because "they each have a reference to the Deity or some Divine attribute"; but that little word "or" expresses uncertainty and dubiousness; still, the statement may be taken as telling us what the compilers of the present Ritual imagined to be the case.

First of all, we ought to say what the Hebrew characters do *not* spell. They do not spell the personal noun *Abel*, for in Hebrew it is *Habel* and not *Abel*. *Abel* means "mourning"; but in the Royal Arch there is no gloom and no bereavement. *Labah* is the "roaring" of a Lion, which is not pertinent to what we do in the Chapter. *B'le* is simply a conjunction, and therefore it does not help us.

Any Companions knowing Hebrew must find it difficult to refrain from smiling at the solecisms of the Ritual. This matter may now appear trivial, and we may feel inclined to make light of it; but our Ancient Brethren were very much in earnest in all that they did.

The way the three Hebrew characters came to be placed on the points of the Eq. Tr. was as follows:—

The Kabbalists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries used to divide the Hebrew Alphabet into three classes of letters: *three* of them, that is, the *Aleph*, the *Mem*, and the *Shin*, were called “Mother-letters,” or fundamental ones; *Seven*, viz. the *Beth*, *Gimel*, *Daleth*, *Caph*, *Pe*, *Resh*, and *Tau*, were called “the Double ones,” because their sound was often doubled. The remaining *twelve* were simply common letters. Now, the first fact we have to notice is that the three letters employed in the Royal Arch, the *Aleph*, the *Beth*, and the *Lamed*, are representatives of these three groups; for there is one “Mother-letter,” the *Aleph*; one “Double,” the *Beth*; and one common, the *Lamed*. The *Aleph* and the *Beth* are the first letters of the groups to which they belong, while the *Lamed* is the fifth in the series of its group, practically in the middle, as indeed it was accounted to mark the middle of the Alphabet.

The totals of these three classes of letters, 3, 7, 12 respectively, were viewed as emblematical, thus: the *Three* “Mother-letters”

represented the Three Primordial elements of Fire, Water, and Air. The *Seven* "Double ones" had an allusion to the Seven Planets and the *Seven* Days of the Week. The *Twelve* common ones referred to the signs of the Zodiac, and the months of the year. From which we learn that the Kabbalists made use of the Zodiac and of the symbolic numbers 3 and 7.

Those same people had certain anagrammic Alphabets invented by them in order to conceal their secrets: that is, they had cryptograms, and these Alphabets gave the key to their decipherment. The first of those Alphabets was called *Albath* and the second, *Abgath*; we can see our letters A.B.L. in the name of the "*ALBath*." Both *Albath* and *Abgath* led to a permutation or commutation of letters, and in writing them out they were always bent in the middle so as to form two lines of eleven characters each; therefore, while in the first line both Alphabets began with *Aleph*, in the second line *Albath* had the *Lamed*, and *Abgath* the *Beth*.

The *Lamed* was the twelfth letter of the ordinary Hebrew Alphabet; and therefore, in

the case of Albath, the three characters *Aleph*, *Beth*, *Lamed* were brought together, hanging in a cluster, presumably because they were characteristic of the three classes of phonetic sounds, thus:

THE ALBATH ALPHABET

11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
כ	י	ט	ח	ז	ו	ה	ד	ג	ב	א
מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ת	ל
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	12

This seems to have been the chief anagrammic Alphabet of the Kabbalists, and the one officially used, perhaps exclusively adopted, by the branch of Kabbalists from whom English Freemasonry took its derivation.

In *Abgath* the *Beth* dropped from the first line to the second, taking the place of the *Lamed*, while this letter was moved back to be the terminal of the first line, thus:

12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	1
ל	כ	י	ט	ח	ז	ו	ה	ד	ג	א
מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ת	ב
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	2

These three letters were, therefore, made typical of the whole Alphabet, placed in a con-

spicuous position, and shown to the Candidate in the meetings of the Kabbalists, as containing the key to certain secrets. They also gave occasion to explain the symbolic numbers, the 3, the 7, and the 12. After that they would be able to decipher the cryptograms formed by means of the anagrammic Alphabets of which the A.B.L. were the key, those cryptograms being employed to veil what could not be divulged.

So long as Hebrew continued to be the language of those Speculative Craftsmen, this trilateral symbol was of great practical value; but when the Hebrew language fell into disuse, the Gentile Masons did not know what to make of them, although, by the conspicuous place assigned to them at the angle of the Eq. Tr., on the face of the A . . . r, they were testifying to their sacredness and to their association with the M.H.

But now the Kabbalists found that in the Volume of the S.L. there is a place, and only one, *Exodus* vi. 3, where these letters were brought together to form a phrase לְאֵל, which, according to the Massoretic pointing, should be read *B'El*, meaning "By *El*." The whole

text reads as follows: "I am *Jehovah*: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of *El Shaddai*, but by my name *Jehovah* was I not known unto them."

Here we should note that the phrase *B'El—Beth, Aleph, Lamed*—is elliptical, meaning "By (the name of) *El*, etc." This passage is an important one for R.A. Masons, because it explains the first introduction of the Name *Jehovah* among the Hebrews; and presumably this is also why it became a commonplace with the Kabbalists.

El from ancient times had been the common designation of any god or divinity worshipped by the people; by its derivation it means "the Strong One."

The Hebrews had originally been polytheists, with gods many and lords many, and therefore they once used the plural of *El*, *Elohim*.

The idea of *God*, in the absolute, as an exclusive Deity, could only be expressed by adding a qualifying adjective or adjectival clause to *El*; and the ancestors of the Hebrew race, the patriarchs, added *Shaddai*, which is

usually rendered "Almighty." There might be many gods, but there could only be "One Almighty God."

When Jacob erected the Pillar, or Altar, of which we read in Genesis, he dedicated it, not to any minor local divinity, but to *El-elohe-Israel*; that is to say, to the God acknowledged and proclaimed by Israel as "the God."

The name of that unique God, Jehovah, did not become known until God communicated it to Moses at the Burning Bush; and that is why "the Burning Bush" has always been one of the symbols of Freemasonry, although the M.M. never refers to it in his Ritual.

The phrase *B'El*, in *Exodus* vi. 3, was, therefore, "of exceeding importance" for our Ancient Brethren. It consisted of the three same letters, typical of the three classes into which the ordinary Alphabet was divided; it suggested the anagrammic Alphabets which were of so much consequence to them; it enhanced the Name which was revealed to Moses; it pointed to the Holy or Sacred Lodge, the first of the "Three Grand Originals"; it helped to explain the aims of these Ceremonies, for

the Candidate was seen to be a new *Moses*, so to speak, who came to the Chapter to be illuminated. This passage is still read nowadays when the M.E.Z. is installed.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Speculative Science was in the most lamentable state of decay, but as those Hebrew characters had been used for as long as the oldest R.A. Masons could remember, they were naturally retained. None could explain their import, but they were an inseparable adjunct of the Chapter, and the Companions endeavoured to enhance their value by the playful combinations which we are still taught to make with them.

In those efforts to make something out of the three letters they were guided by the general character of the R.A. Degree; but not being very good Hebrew scholars, if they did not hit on their true historic function, they at least did their best to combine them so as to make them yield some ideas consonant with the object and purpose of the Degree. The letters were used to form words more or less arbitrary; and while we feel that they mishandled them, it would still be possible to

rectify those combinations without losing the illustrations of our conception of God which they are meant to give us.

The Ritual says that "it is immaterial which way the combination is begun." In so saying, we assume that the three Hebrew characters stand for three distinct elements, and we may readily concede this. But if we are to read them as in *Exodus* vi. 3, *B'El*, the *Aleph* should be in the middle, that is, at the summit, and both *Beth* and *Lamed* at the two lower ends respectively. This may seem to be comparatively unimportant, but we think that the *Aleph* ought to be placed at the apex of the Eq. Tr. and the other two letters at the right and left of the base; and for this we would assign three reasons.

(1) Because the *Aleph* is the first letter of the Hebrew Alphabet, and the first of the "Mother Letters." The anagrammic Alphabets of the Kabbalists also began with *Aleph*: therefore its priority cannot be questioned.

(2) The *Aleph* is the initial of both the original name of God, *El*, and of the Hebrew word, אב, *Ab*, "Father," two familiar com-

binations, and the summit of the Eq. Tr. seems the most appropriate place for it.

(3) The *Aleph* is also the initial of און, *On*, "Strength or Power," another divine name which conveys the conception of God inculcated on the Initiate, that is, "the Strengthen-er," not only of the individual character, but of the entire Institution.

The passage we have been dealing with, *Exodus* vi. 3, was taken as proving that the letters in question had some reference to the Deity; and the compilers of the Ritual really thought that they had not only succeeded in establishing the fact, but they had made them convey the idea of a Triune Essence; first, by the position they assigned to them, having them distributed among the three points of the Eq. Tr., which was regarded as a symbol of God; and then by so combining them as to express the idea which is always present in the minds of R.A. Masons. In the Obligation taken by Candidates in the eighteenth century the letters were expressly referred to as "the key" to the Ineffable Mystery.

But now let us see how the present combinations miss the mark. They are four in

number: *A . . . b*, *A . . . l*, *B . . . l*, and *L . . . b*; and they are said to mean "Father, Word or High, Lord and Heart," and therefore they may be construed thus: "F . . . L . . . ; W . . . L . . . ; S . . . L"

Leb, in Hebrew, means literally the physical organ called "Heart," but we take it as a synonym of "Spirit," on the ground that "the heart cannot exist without the spirit"; the modern expositor having overlooked the fact that the Hebrew has a distinct word for "spirit," viz. *Ruakh*.

Many Companions speak of *Lab*, which is meaningless, probably because they have the impression that *Aleph* must enter into the word, and the *Aleph* must in all cases be sounded as the phonetic *a*.

The alternative reading, "spirit," might be defended on the ground that in the V.S.L. *Leb* is sometimes used as synonymous with the vital principle in man.

Ab is correct, being formed with *Aleph* and *Beth*. But, strangely enough, the modern interpreter (whoever he was) has failed to note that *Ab*, although in its primary acceptance means "father," was also a title of distinc-

tion, applicable to men. It is used with reference to our M., H.; *Abiff*, or rather *Abiv*, meaning "his father, or his master builder."

As one of the three Grand Masters, or *Abim*, who presided at the building of K.S.T., H. is said, because of "his exquisite skill and workmanship," to typify "the Beauty" of the M.H.

The second and third are most decidedly defective words. *Al* does nowhere signify "the Word." The only way we can account for this blunder is that the Masons of 200 years ago felt that after *Father L* . . . there must come a reference to the Second Person of the Trinity, and as in the Christian dogma the *Logos* was "the Word of the Father," they jumped to the conclusion that *Al* must embody some sort of reference to the "Word" in this limited sense. *Al* could never signify "Word," which in Hebrew is *dābar*; but it might mean "an oath," or, as a verb, "invoking under oath."

Nor is *Al* ever used in the sense of "Heaven, or on high," for in Hebrew "Heaven" is *Shemayim*. But, changing the *Aleph* for the other semi-vowel *Ain*, we should get a word

which is pronounced exactly in the same way, *Al* meaning "on high," and which might be taken to refer to "Heaven," just as in pidgin English they say *top-side* for "Heaven."

In the Volume of the S.L. we find the word *Al*, that is, spelled not with *Aleph* but with *Ain*; and then it is translated "the Most High," which is a title of God. But in this matter we have only three letters at our disposal, and *Ain* is not one of them.

These serious slips in the modern Ritual can only be excused by saying that some well-meaning, but not well-informed, person was honestly doing his best to explain the Hebrew characters which were evidently part and parcel of our symbolism, but to which the R.A. Masons had lost the clue.

As we said before, they were a sort of mnemonic supplied by the Kabbalists for the guidance of their Candidates.

The exposition given by the R.A. Masons of the eighteenth century, with only a very superficial knowledge of Hebrew, had necessarily to be somewhat crude and puerile; but they were fully conscious of their limitations; and sometimes they were honest enough to

acknowledge the inadequacy of what they said. They realised that in dealing with both the Letters and the Words of R.A. Masonry they were dealing with literary fossils which it was hard to construe.

CHAPTER XI

THE MYSTERY OF J.B.O.

Now, as regards J.B.O., the statement that the present explanation of it is "the best that can be given" sounds like an apology or a confession of incapacity. It was a brave effort, and the compilers of the Ritual could not do more. All the same, it is disappointing.

The first difficulty that confronts us is the assertion that this is in "four languages"; for how can *three* words be in *four* languages? We can easily conceive a word being common to two languages, but when that happens we shall find either that those two languages are derived from a common stock, or that in one case the word in question has been borrowed from the other language.

In the American Ritual of the end of the eighteenth century it is stated that J.B.O. is in "three" languages, viz. Chaldean, Hebrew, and Syriac, which is more reasonable. And

because of this we assume that the clause "and Egyptian" is an interpolation. Probably the addition is due to the desire of the Brethren of the eighteenth century to illustrate the cosmopolitan character of Freemasonry; for this seemed to afford proof of it; that is, if the words of the Royal Arch were words representative of *three* languages, or, as some said, of "four." This cosmopolitanism was in keeping with the syncretistic tendency of Kabbalism.

There may also have been a wish to establish a connection between Freemasonry and ancient Egypt, which at the time, before Champollion's discovery permitted of the decipherment of the hieroglyphic inscriptions, was regarded as a land of mystery. Indeed, until quite recent times our knowledge of things Egyptian continued to be very imperfect.

But let us inquire into the facts of the case.

As we observed before, at present the M.E.Z. tells us that J. is "the Chaldean Name of God." We need not deny the statement; but, unfortunately, there is no unanimity as to its right pronunciation; and, without this, how can we know, or even discuss, its derivation?

Probably this J. had some connection with *Jehovah*. Perhaps *Jove*, too, was akin to the Tetragrammaton, as Bro. Alexander Pope suggested in his *Universal Prayer*, where he certainly manifests the cosmopolitan spirit of early Freemasonry.

Properly speaking, the "Chaldean" language was that of the Babylonian cuneiform inscriptions, and therefore a modern recovery. It was the official language of the Chaldean Empire, of which Babylon was the capital. But the terms *Chaldee* and *Chaldean* have often been applied to the Aramaic language, which was a dialect of the later Hebrews. Certain chapters of the Old Testament are written in Aramaic, and that seems to have been what the compilers of the Ritual had in mind when they spoke of the "Chaldean" language.

In the Psalms we sometimes meet with the name *Jah*, and this seems to be an abbreviated form of the name *Jehovah*, or perhaps *Jehovah* is *Jah* writ large. It may have originated through a desire not to write or pronounce that Holy Name; but this is problematical.

We read that *B.* is a Syriac word, signifying

“Lord or Powerful.” But here again we must be careful. Our pronunciation is usually wrong; as we sound it, it is neither Syriac, nor Hebrew, nor Aramaic; it makes no sense in any language that we know of.

Baal is as much Hebrew as it is Syriac. It means “Lord, or one holding sway or power”; and therefore it agrees with the definition which the Ritual gives of B.

Baal is a divine title, and if applied to the M.H. it would then be expressive of Omnipotence or Sovereignty; but unfortunately all the gods of the Gentiles were called *Baals*, *Baalim*; whence the denunciation of Baal-worship by the prophets of Israel.

Baal can have nothing to do with the word on the Eq. Tr., because whatever its derivation, or its import, it cannot be spelled with the three letters at our disposal, which were supposed to be capable of spelling B. For *Baal* in Hebrew is always written with an *Ain*, never with an *Aleph*.

Bel is written with two letters only, *Beth* and *Lamed*; and therefore it is a more satisfactory word. Besides, it was a genuine Chaldean word; that is, not Aramaic, but

Babylonian. It is neither Hebrew nor Syriac, although the cult of Bel was imported into Palestine. It may also mean "Lord or Powerful," but in the Volume of the S.L. it invariably occurs as the name of a particular Deity, that is, is a proper noun.

Evidently there has been some confusion between *Bel* or *Baal*, and, to make matters worse, we have given B. a wrong pronunciation.

Neither in *Baal* nor in *Bel*, nor in our own B., is the word "formed with the preposition B.', *in* or *on*."

B.' is indeed a preposition; we find it so used in the Word of the Initiate, where we assert that it means "*In* S. . . .," though the real sense is "*By* Him (*is*) S. . . ."; that is to say, "Through *God* we may get S. . . ." But the initial of those three names has nothing to do with the preposition B.'

In Hebrew *Ul* is spelled אֵל, *Aleph*, *Vav*, *Lamed*; and it means "Prince or Chief." Adding the preposition B.', therefore, we should have four letters, and one of them is *Vav*, which has no place on the Eq. Tr.

O. is stated to be an "Egyptian word,

signifying Father of All." This is a misstatement, made no doubt with a good intention, but there is no sense in it. It must be put down, as we said before, to the ignorance that prevailed concerning Egypt in the eighteenth century, when as yet the ancient inscriptions of that country had not been deciphered, and when anything said about the religion or the occult lore of Egypt would require the proverbial grain of salt.

But was there ever a deity called *On*? Recently some facts have received attention which prove conclusively that in ancient times there was a god called *On*, although he was not an Egyptian deity.

In the days of Abraham *Beth-El* (which in Hebrew means "House or Temple of *El*") was known as *Beth-On*, "House or Temple of *On*," this name being sometimes transliterated *Aven*. This, then, implies that in Canaan there was an *El*, or god of that name, *On* or *Aven*.

The Greek translators, known as the Septuagint, 2000 years ago transliterated this name into $\Omega\nu$, but our English translations give it variously as *On* or *Aven*; the exact value of

the three Hebrew letters of which it is composed may be represented by *A—w—n*.

We might observe, too, that Benjamin ("Son of my Right Hand") was so named by his father; but his mother felt that as he had been born at *Beth-On*, where *On* was the local deity, he should be named *Ben-Oni*, "Son of On."

Again, Amos mentions *Bikath-On*, or *Aven*, "the plain of *On* or *Aven*," which is the same name, but this time with reference to Syria.

The facts, then, lead us to infer that in very remote times there was a deity called *On*, which was worshipped in Canaan and in Syria; it may have been known in Egypt, but if so it must have been a foreign deity; perhaps, most probably, identical with *Anu*, the Babylonian god.

After the Babylonian captivity another name for God came into vogue, which has puzzled scholars, viz. *El Elion*. It is commonly regarded as Chaldean, although there is evidence to show that this name was also used by the Phœnicians. In the older books of the Old Testament it occurs only once; and in that solitary instance (*Numbers* xxiv. 6) it is put in the mouth of a man who was not

a Hebrew. Sayce takes it to mean "the Mighty King," but we think that it is compounded of *El* and *On*, and means "My God *On*," or *Anu*. The form "*El El . . .*" does not seem right, but we have a parallel case in "*El Elohe. . .*"

In the matter of this name, however, the R.A. Masons fell into a fallacy. In ancient Egypt there was a famous city called *On*; it is mentioned in the Old Testament, where it is spelled אֵן, *aleph, vav, nun*, equal to A—W—N. In Jeremiah's time (xliii. 13) the Hebrews gave to that city the name of *Beth-Shemesh*; and we know through Herodotus that the Greeks called it *Heliopolis*, both names meaning practically the same thing; that is, "House or City of the Sun." In the Egyptian hieroglyphic it is called *Anu*, which coincides with the Babylonian Deity.

What, then, are we to make of this name *On* or *Anu*? Cyril, who at the beginning of the sixth century was Bishop of Alexandria, declared that it was but another name for "the Sun"; and, as a matter of fact, Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* tells us that the city of *On* was called *Heliopolis* on account of

being "the centre of Sun-worship in Egypt, and the most important seat of learning in the country."

But now, in Old Egyptian, the name for the Sun-God was *Ra*, not Anu nor On. Anu was the Babylonian Sky-God, and however the Egyptian people may have regarded him in adopting him into their pantheon, his name was decidedly foreign. But did the Egyptians take to the cult of *Anu*? This question hangs on the identification of the name of the city *On* and *Anu*.

We have already seen that the said cult was in practice in Palestine and Syria from the days of Abraham; and it would not be difficult for it to pass from the Asiatic continent to Egypt. Indeed, it is on record that the worship of Anu was introduced into Egypt very soon after the victories which Rameses II obtained in Syria about 1200 B.C., when it was popularly called *Anaitis*.

Certain it is that the Babylonian culture spread both into Syria and into Egypt from a very early age, as witness the cuneiform tablets found at Tell-el-Amarna some years ago, and the discovery recently made in

Cæsarea of archives full of cuneiform records.

Now, coming from the distant past to comparatively modern times, there is one fact that we ought to take account of, viz. that the Masons of the eighteenth century could not have had the insight with which we are blessed into the archæology of the East; and this is why they jumped to the conclusion that *On* was an Egyptian word.

The Greeks spoke of *On* as Heliopolis, "City of the Sun"; and knowing that the Sun was the chief Deity worshipped by the Egyptians, they assumed that *On* must be the native name for "the Sun," the great fertiliser of their delta, to whom therefore they gave the beautiful title of "Father of All."

They did not see that their reasoning was unsound: *On*, or *Anu*, was not an Egyptian word at all. The Egyptian people evidently regarded *On* as a solar deity, but in reality it was the chief of a Babylonian Triad presiding in the high heavens. It was only in this respect that he deserved to be called "the Father."

The title "Father of all" is taken from Pope's *Universal Prayer*:

" Father of all ! In every age,
In every clime ador'd,
By Saint, by Savage, and by Sage,
Jehovah, Jove or Lord."

Alexander Pope was a Mason, initiated not many years after the formation of the Grand Lodge of London. He was one of the most popular poets at the time when the R.A. Ritual took its present form, and he seemed to be influenced by the philosophy of the Royal Arch. In one of his poems, the *Dunciad*, there are some allusions to the Freemasons.

When the R.A. Ritual underwent its last recension in the eighteenth century, the history of Assyria and Babylon was scarcely known, and it would have been quite impossible for the Masons of that time to devise or invent the Sacred Word; and by the way they dealt with both A.B.L. and J.B.O. we see how imperfect was their knowledge of things Oriental. Nevertheless, we must not be too severe with them; for in those days, when people dealt with anything "Chaldean," they were sure to bungle.

In 1860 Smith's *Bible Dictionary* declared "the Babylonian Bel" to be identical with the *Baal* of the Hebrews; and yet unquestionably *Bel* is a proper noun, whereas *Baal* is a common one, occurring often in the plural form, *Baalim*.

Rawlinson, whom we may call the father of Assyriology, was the first Orientalist who, ten years before, had ventured to make a distinction between the two. It was only from 1855 and onwards that the Babylonian inscriptions began to be deciphered and made to reveal their secrets; and then it became possible to discuss these things and to discriminate between the names.

And, indeed, by reading those inscriptions an astonishing discovery was made. For then it became clear that the chief Deity of Babylon was not *Bel*, but *Anu*; or rather that there was not *one* but *three* chief Deities, and their names were *Anu*, *Bel*, *Ea*, always enumerated in the same order.

For many centuries the R.A. Masons or their predecessors had been using a curious combination of names, J.B.O., which they declared to be as old as the Tower of Babel,

or at least as the time of Solomon. Nothing like it could be found anywhere. The combination was exclusively theirs ; and they had been repeating it from time immemorial, but without the remotest idea of whence it came.

Now, however, when the cuneiform inscriptions were being deciphered, light was thrown on the age-long mystery of Freemasonry ; for J.B.O. was found to have been derived from Babylon, and to be a formula with a history.

The only reference extant to those names belongs to the beginning of the sixth century ; but then the form they assume is somewhat different from what we usually find in Babylonian records. For one of the Fathers of the Church, Damascius, wrote that the Chaldeans believed in a Trinity of Gods, and gave the Names of the three as *Anus*, *Illinos*, and *Aas*. The identity of the first with *Anu* is obvious ; the last can also be recognised as being *Ea*. But *Illinos* seems to be a total stranger. Maspero, however, gives a satisfactory explanation, for he says that the *Inlil* of the Assyrians (which he says was pronounced *Illil*), was simply the Sumerian name of *Bel*.

It is well that there exist these differences between Damascius and the Babylonian inscriptions; for otherwise it might have been said that the R.A. Masons had borrowed those names from Damascius, and had not obtained them, as they claimed, by an independent tradition older than him.

At length, then, the cuneiform script was read, and people found all about the Babylonian theological formula *Anu, Bel, Ea*. It did not seem to be anyway related to Freemasonry, or indeed to be of any interest to Masons; why, even now a R.A. Companion may be told about it and it leaves him cold. But, looking at those names closely, we may observe that they are virtually J.B.O. read backwards; that is, *Anu* is O., *Bel* is B., *Ea* is J. No one versed in Oriental lore will fail to perceive their identity.

Let us illustrate the subject by a few quotations from the Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions in which the three names occur, that we may see how they were used.

In 1872 George Smith brought to light the Assyrian Epic of Creation; and in this wonderful composition we find a refer-

ence to the divine Triad in the following terms:

*"The great Building E-sarra, which he built in the heavens,
He caused ANU, BEL, and EA to inhabit as their stronghold."*

E-sarra is simply "the firmament," which in the ancient East was conceived as the roof of an immense building; and the Three Deities named were supposed to rule jointly from there as Three Principals of the Cosmic Lodge, or Chapter; that is to say, the Universe. This idea takes us back no less than 3000 B.C.: *Anu* holds sway over the Sky; but with him is *Bel*, who reigns supreme over the Earth and its inhabitants; and *Ea* rules with equal power over the Watery Deep or Hades.

Then, in the Seven Tablets of Creation there is a beautiful prayer addressed to the goddess *Ishtar* (the *Ashtoreth* of the Old Testament), in which there occurs this passage:

*"ANU, BEL, EA have raised Thee on high, among the gods have They made great Thy dominion ;
They have exalted Thee among all the Spirits of heaven ; They have made Thy rank pre-eminent."*

And, lastly, there is an inscription left by one Ear-aku, of Larsa, declaring that "On the day when *Anu*, *Bel*, and *Ea*, the Great Gods, gave into my hands the ancient city of Erech, I built to the god Ningirsu, my King [*evidently a local deity*], the Temple of Duggu-Sammu, etc."

So it turns out that J.B.O. are not a meaningless jargon ; and not the combination "in four languages" which we speak of ; but a formula in Old Chaldean, quite familiar to the scholars of Babylon at a very remote age, anterior even to the time of Abraham.

And here we should remind the reader of what has already been said before, that the names were not merely a theological formula, they were an astronomical one as well, for they had the effect of dividing the Universe into three parts, although our Ancient Brethren have been using them for thousands of years without remotely suspecting this.

But here it will be asked, How could these Babylonian names have been handed down to us from such a remote age? Undoubtedly through the Kabbalists, who, being Jews, had

all along been in touch with the East. We saw that one of the chief Kabbalist teachers of the ninth century came to Europe from Babylon and ranked as *Nasi*; that is, "Chief of the Holy Sanhedrin." Besides, the Jews had been in captivity for seventy years in Babylon, and must have absorbed much of the Babylonian culture.

The Kabbalists were the only people who in the Middle Ages knew the origin and meaning of those names. But, as a matter of fact, the names had passed into the Hebrew language, as we must have noticed when we discussed their derivation. They were written thus: (1) *יה*, (2) *בל*, (3) *און*; and, of course, when the Christians looked at them they took them in the order indicated by the numbers we have appended, 1, 2, 3; although, writing from right to left, as the Kabbalists did, they should have been read contrariwise. This accounts for their inversion in the R.A. Chapter, although we have somewhat modified their vocalisation, and we do not pronounce them as they should be.

It is doubtful whether the Kabbalists of the ninth century knew that the ancient Baby-

lonians wrote in the cuneiform script from left to right, for the key to that form of writing had been completely lost.

As to the pronunciation of the names, it must have been traditional, because they belonged to an age long anterior to the invention of the vowel-points by the Massorites. Their exact pronunciation could not be expressed in old Hebrew.

Nor does our identification of J.B.O. admit of debate. If it were a case of mere resemblances between single words or names, there might be the possibility of a fallacy, or some uncertainty; but in a series of three names, in a certain order, the facts of the case render the identification beyond question.

The Kabbalists, being monotheists, were bound to deal with these names according to their conception of God; and hence, while regarding God as a Unity, they made the names expressive of a Trinity of ideas. *Ea* became *Yah* (which in our English Authorised Version of the Volume of the S.L. is used as a contraction of *Jehovah*), and therefore *Yah*, or *Jah*, came to be treated as the Name of T.T.A.L.G.M.H., to which the first place

should be given. From this point of view it is true that J. is Chaldean or Babylonian ; but this is another instance of our Principals speaking truer than they knew.

The other two names then followed in their order, describing other aspects of the One Deity, the second signifying "Lordship," the third "Power"; for in that Deity they conceived three Energies or Potencies. There was a Mystery of "Three in One and One in Three," but not in the sense of our Christian dogma.

The identity of the Words is so plain and obvious that it is almost incredible that it could have escaped the notice of our acute Masonic scholars.

Nowadays we call a brother "Word-perfect" if he can rehearse our Ceremonies without making any mistake. But originally "a Word-perfect Mason" was one who had attained to the highest honour of being entrusted with J.B.O.; for it was "the most convincing proof" that any man could give of being a Brother.

The first reference of J.B.O. on record is in a metrical description of Perth, Scotland, *The*

Muses, by Henry Adamson, in 1638, where there occur these two lines:

“ For we are Brethren of the Rosie Cross,
We have the Mason Word and second sight.”

The poet evidently belonged to a new occult society called the “Rosie Cross,” the members of which were full of enthusiasm. As a matter of fact, the Rosicrucians had made it a practice to seek initiation in the Masonic Fraternity, which we know was in existence in Scotland at the close of the sixteenth century, and some of them had actually gained the knowledge of the Sacred Word with all that that implies. They also claimed some occult powers to which the modern Rosicrucians have no pretension.

Evidently “the Mason Word” was much older than “the Rosie Cross”; and the acquisition of it was an achievement to be proud of. It brought them great prestige, because everyone knew how jealously it had been guarded through all the long centuries previous to that date, 1638. But even after they had obtained the secret they did not know what to make of it. It was on this account that they did not

incorporate it into their Degree. Happily the Rosicrucians of that period were earnestly minded men who respected the secrets of Masonry, and so the knowledge they gained did not lead to its vulgarisation.

CHAPTER XII

THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE

WE are writing to vindicate the claim of the Royal Arch to great antiquity. We readily admit that it is now wearing a new dress, and that it is being worked on new lines; yet we hold that at the root of it there are very ancient traditions, and that the secrets enshrined in it are the lore of a hoary age, preserved for our benefit amidst the vast changes and cataclysms that have taken place.

Here it would serve no good purpose to debate how much or how little we owe to this or that brother for the consolidation of the present Ritual, which confessedly is comparatively modern. We would go far behind that.

There is an Old American Ritual to which we strongly feel that sufficient attention has not been paid. It was transplanted from here to the American Colonies, where it was com-

paratively safe from the interference of our Degree-mongers. Its text shows the order of the R.A. Ceremonies as they were practised in the Old World at the end of the eighteenth century, and it seems to be our only guide to the Old English Ritual. There we find some things which are most illuminating, and which ought to be taken into account as evidence.

To begin with, it was a decidedly Jewish production; it bore witness to the fact that originally it had been worked by Jews.

In it there are nine Officers, and the primacy is held by the High Priest, not by the King. This was natural, for there had been a High Priest in Israel long before there was a King.

On opening the Chapter, first of all, "the Captain of the Host," who was the Master of Ceremonies, so to speak, had to prove the Chapter close-tyled (*although this expression was never used*); and he did it by nine KK.'s at the door. It was only after this had been done that the furniture of the Chapter was brought out, and that the Companions clothed themselves.

The Captain of the Host was asked by the

High Priest whether he was a R.A. Mason, to which he replied: "I am, that I am." Being asked how he could demonstrate that he was a R.A. Mason, he answered: "By three times three"; which was an allusion to the Triple Triangle.

Afterwards he stated the situation and duty of each Officer, and "the colour of the banners" borne by the three Grand Masters of the Veils, as well as of his own. There were four such Banners.

Then the Companions arranged themselves "in a circle round the Altar," kneeling on the right knee, leaving an open space for the Three Principals to pass into the middle of this circle. Afterwards they got up and formed squads of three for the purpose of giving "the Grand Omnific Word," in which every Companion took part.

The Sacred Obl . . . was much longer than it is at present. He was not only to "not dare to pronounce the S. and M. Name," but "not to reveal the key to the ineffable characters"; above all, he was not to assist in the exaltation of either more or less than three brethren at a time.

The Prayer was offered not by the High Priest but by the P.S.

There was a scene in which the Candidate personated Moses before the Burning Bush. This seems to have been a feature of the original R.A. Degree. When Moses was called by God, the P.S. answered for the Candidate: "Here am I."

When the three M.M. from B. have been commissioned to take part in the holy work, they go to the N.E. corner of the ruins, preparatory to laying the foundation of the new Temple. This explains the real meaning of the Initiates being placed at the N.E. part of the Craft Lodge.

The motto of the Chapter, *Holiness to the Lord*, which with us has fallen into disuse, crops up again and again.

The phrase which now occurs in the Ceremony of Exaltation, "*It is found*," might be thought to suggest the exclamation of Archimedes' *Eureka!* when he discovered his test for the purity of the gold in Hiero's crown. But in reality it is a survival from the older Ritual, when we come to the incident of the finding of the Scroll. For the High Priest then

repeats three times: "This is the Book of the Law, long lost but now found; holiness to the Lord."

"Holiness to the Lord" is a phrase which we often find in the Sacred Writings. At one time it appeared on the three Sceptres written in Hebrew characters, and so in some Chapters they still comment on "the inscription on the Sceptre." The Hebrew letters in that case might be transliterated into English thus: *Kadesh la YHWH*. There is a Degree which has adopted this word *Kadosh*, "Holy," for its name; but unfortunately we have dropped it altogether. In the T.B. of the F.C., however, there is an Archway on the top of the Staircase, and there we may see: "*Holiness to the Lord*," written in Hebrew characters. Its evidential value is obvious.

The Three Principals, when viewing the Ark brought up from the Vault, make the same remark: "This is the Ark of the Covenant." This Ark was not used in the Ceremonies of the Craft, but 200 years ago it was always included in the Diagrams which the Masons were fond of compiling, and as a matter of fact it was also included among the regalia of

the Lodge. Therefore we conclude that it must have been brought into requisition in some other Masonic Ceremony, as for instance in the exaltation of the Masons.

About the Ark that had been found, the High Priest used to exclaim: "Deposited in the year 3000. By Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre; and Hiram Abiff. For the good of Masonry generally, but the Jewish nation in particular." These words of the High Priest prove two things:

First, that what the Craft Masons say about our M. having been slain 3000 years after the Creation of the world, has been taken from the Royal Arch, where we discover the place of H.A.'s interment. The foundation deposit must have been laid there very soon after his death, when K.S.T. was completed ;

Secondly, that the earlier Masons entertained no doubt whatever of the Jewish origin of their Science ; although the Hebrew element was toned down to bring it to the comprehension of the Gentile, that is, the Christian mind. Kabbalism was an essentially Jewish product, but it sought to benefit those Christians who had embraced "Freemasonry."

In our modern Rituals we perceive numerous omissions and additions, made by men who did not fully understand the character of the Degree; those alterations have come to disfigure something which was very ancient and very beautiful. But, despite everything, our Officers are frequently giving us clear indications of the origin of the Degree by what they say and do, speaking truer than they know, imparting conceptions of God which they cannot fathom, expressing ideas with which they are quite unfamiliar, derived from a pre-historic age, with which the present generation of Masons are unacquainted. Verily we are men who have forgotten the Rock whence we were hewn.

The question has often been asked: What was it that made the old Architects and other learned men become Patrons of our Speculative Science; and that this Speculative Science has acquired the complexion that it now has? We have already thrown some light on this problem when we discussed the advent of Euclid into England. But here we propose to show that Freemasonry as we now understand it has the Royal Arch behind it. It

was because the Royal Arch combined a form of Kabbalism with the study of Geometry that it became the inspiration of Speculative Masons.

Some will naturally argue that if the Royal Arch was once an integral part of the M.M.'s Degree, there should be some indications, some coincidences, some tell-tale facts, in the ordeals to which the Craft Masons are subjected. Can we detect any of these things in the Ritual? To this question we shall give a most categorical answer. And it is by this means that we shall prove that the Royal Arch, far from being a modern invention, is much older than Craft Masonry.

For it is by comparing the two Rituals, that of the Craft and that of the Royal Arch, that we can satisfactorily explain how certain things have been introduced into the former. It is because our Supreme Degree is far older than Craft Masonry that we find numerous undesigned coincidences in the two Rituals, that of the Lodge and that of the Chapter. The Royal Arch is not merely a picturesque background for the Craft, but the rationale for much of what the Craft Masons do and say.

THE THREE WHO RULE A LODGE

Thus, for instance, if there are Three Principal Officers in a Lodge, it is only because from the first the R.A. Masons have had "Three Principals." These Principals were always known by certain historic names; but naturally their substitutes in the Craft dropped the names, and were simply called "Officers," W.M. and W.'s.

That the three Officers of the Lodge were a characteristic of Freemasonry far anterior to the Grand Lodge of London, may be inferred from the Minutes of the Lodge of Antiquity. For in the year 1721 it is recorded that the Lodge possessed Three Candlesticks, which had been presented by Sir Christopher Wren for use during the Ceremonies. Those Three Candlesticks were treasured as Ornaments of the Lodge, and in that year the Lodge ordered that a suitable case should be made for their preservation.

The Three Officers of the Royal Arch were the representatives of an Ineffable Triad, which has led to the custom we now have of triplicating everything else, forming triads of all sorts.

This custom of the Chapter passed to the Degrees of probation, that is, the Craft, where everything goes in threes.

THE SYMBOLIC NUMBERS

As the writer has already explained in another book, *The Arithmetic of Freemasonry*, in the Craft everything is made to conform to the three symbolic numbers, 3, 5, 7; but it is the Royal Arch that supplies the rationale for their use, viz. the Three Rulers; the Five Signs; the Seven S . . . by which we show our reverence for T.T.A.L.G.M.H. And these Seven S . . . are made to signify all the three numbers, for we halt and b . . . at the 3rd, 5th, 7th.

OUR MYSTIC BADGE

The F.C.'s make a great mystery of "certain Hebrew characters . . . denoting God," which are inscribed within the Sacred Symbol discovered in the "centre" of K.S.T., wherever that may be. But it is plainly asserted that those characters have in modern times been substituted with a Roman letter, the G. Those characters take the mind back to the First or

Holy Lodge, being as old as our Grand Master Moses, and they give us the clue to the inmost secret of the Royal Arch. Indeed, it is only in the Chapter that we learn how sacred that symbol is. Our ancient Brethren read and wrote Hebrew, but we have lost the art, and hence we minimise many things which they esteemed as of the utmost importance.

THE PRIEST OF ISRAEL

It is said that the Pavement of a M.M.'s Lodge is "for the High Priest to walk on"; and that once a year, on the Day of Atonement, he entered the *Sanctum Sanctorum* for certain ceremonies which are not specified. But that M.M.'s Lodge answered to the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, where the High Priest ought to be in evidence; yet, as a matter of fact, no High Priest is to be seen in a Craft Lodge.

It is only when the M.M. completes his Degree in the Chapter that he meets with a High Priest, and this is what the compilers of the Craft Ritual had in mind. He is referred to there because the Tetragrammaton was a secret of his, and on the Day of Atonement, when he uttered the Name, which he did ten

times over, he gave the proper vocalisation of it for the pious Priests to copy.

As we have already observed, in ancient times the High Priest used to preside over the Chapter, and the idea still lingers in the Craft Ritual. The subordination of the King to the High Priest can be justified on the ground that the Priest had always been the depository of knowledge.

VARIOUS SYMBOLS

The Burning Bush, the Rainbow, and the Canopy of Heaven always appeared in the old Masonic Charts or collections of symbols published by the Masons. In them the firmament was always depicted as an Arch, the Arch of Heaven; it was connected with the Zodiac.

In the early part of the eighteenth century the Ark of the Covenant used to be included among the regalia of every Lodge. How can we explain this, seeing that in Craft Masonry no mention is ever made of either this or the other symbols mentioned? The answer is that in the more advanced stage of the M.M.'s Degree the Ark of the Covenant, the Burning Bush, etc., were symbols of great consequence,

although used exclusively in the ceremonies of the Royal Arch.

Masons talk of "the length of my cable-toe." But what is it? There is nothing in the Craft to explain the phrase. When, however, we penetrate the Holy Sanhedrin we see someone coming in with a cord or life-line which has been wound round his w . . . , and this leads to a long narrative. At one time it was wound three times, and in some places it was the custom to wind it seven times.

Freemasons in general are described as "the thousands who range under our Banners." But what were those Banners? and where were they to be found? As we look round the Lodge we see only one, and so little is made of it that few of the members ever notice it. According to the old R.A. Ritual, however, in every Chapter there were at least four Banners in actual use by the Three Grand Masters of the Veils and the Captain of the Host; that is, the four Standards corresponding to the four divisions of the army of Israel, on which appeared a device of a spiritual nature. And we must remember that every Candidate is entrusted with a staff of office on which

appears "an ensign," a pictorial symbol. Can there be any doubt that the allusion in the Ceremony of Initiation is to these? Whoever composed the address where the phrase occurs knew the practice of R.A. Masons.

THE DEEPER SECRETS

In the third Degree we are left in suspense; the W.M. undertakes to "repair that loss," but he does not do it, disappointing the Candidate, for at the close of the Ceremony he postpones his undertaking *sine die*, "until time or circumstances shall restore, etc."; that is to say, until the proper time arrives, when the promised recovery will be effected. That implies that the W.M. has withheld something.

Obviously none of the Symbolic Words used in Craft Masonry can be the thing which is "lost." Indeed, as we advance, all those Words are being left behind; and what at length we find is totally different. And this is natural, for in the Craft Degrees we are dealing largely with "substituted secrets"; not with the real thing, but with the allegories and adumbrations of the Builder-Masons;

although here and there those people did propound genuine Kabbalistic truths in a naked form, which probably had dropped out of their place and had been incorporated in their working.

We should never lose sight of the fact that the "Degrees of probation" were intended to be preparatory to what came after, the Higher Mysteries of the Royal Arch; and therefore all through those Degrees the Brethren were urged to look for something more substantial, grander, and diviner.

On the M.M.'s coffin there are three 5's, but we are nowhere told what they signify. No M.M. has the remotest idea of it unless he has become a R.A. Companion. For this is a formula of the Royal Arch: a right foot, left hand, and right hand in a certain position; for each 5 on the T.B. stands for five digits, a hand or a foot.

Again, the M.M. is told that H.A. "without the consent and co-operation of the other two, he neither could nor would divulge" the genuine secrets. But why is this left so mysterious? Evidently it referred to something that belongs to a more advanced Degree,

and which is of greater importance than anything in the Craft. For the counterpart of that expression we have to look at the Obl . . . of the R.A. Companion, "Unless in the presence and with the assistance of two or more"

THE SUN-SYMBOL

The "Border," which the modern Craft Mason takes to be simply the fringe of a carpet, was originally a Zodiac, and this Zodiac was also used in the Chapter as a symbol; this has been fully explained in connection with the Astronomy of the Royal Arch.

The meaning of "the Blazing Star" is almost lost in the Craft, except that in the Explanation of the First T.B. it is acknowledged to refer to "the Sun." The name was adopted to conceal the reference. But where does the Sun come in as a Symbol? We believe that the expression was first used to refer to the Sun depicted in the centre of the Triple Triangle.

THE REGAL ART

M.M.'s speak of a "*Grand or Royal Sign.*" But what is it? Surely it is the Sign corre-

sponding to the “Third or *Grand and Royal* Lodge” of which our Principal Sojourner speaks. That Lodge was presided over by Z., H., and J., and therefore it is identical with the Holy Royal Arch Chapter of Jerusalem. And what is the nature of the Sign but the suggestion of a Vault over the heads of those who have found the secrets? It may in a way remind us of the Arch of Heaven, which is also above us; but why is it called *Royal*?

This question suggests another, which is: Who are the Monarchs who “have been promoters of the Art”? With Masons this is a commonplace, which sometimes raises a smile. So far as European Kings are concerned, the statement would be hard to substantiate. But the Masonic Tradition takes us back to a remote age, for the Kabbalists claimed Zerubabel, Josiah, “the Royal Solomon” (as they call him in Grand Lodge), and Hiram, King of Tyre, as adepts of their Speculative Science.

Neither of the two previous Grand Originals was strictly *Royal*, but they were spiritual. True, in the second we have “the *Royal* Solomon” presiding, but the other Principal, H., King of Tyre, and H., the W.’s Son, are

not his subjects, and do not even belong to the Hebrew race. Surely no one will pretend that Solomon was Suzerain Lord of the King of Tyre. Rather he presides in his character of Regent of the Secret Tradition; and that is why his Lodge is called *Sacred* rather than *Royal*. In it there is neither High Priest nor Scribe. So, too, in the First or Holy Lodge, Moses seems to combine the three Offices, and the other two Officers seem to be simply his assistants; that is, there is nothing strictly Regal about it.

The "Grand and Royal" Sign had reference to the King of Heaven (of whom the Kings of Israel were the representatives), to whom the Masons ascribe "all glory" and "all gratitude." A M.M. is expected to give that Sign because he comes into the Presence of the Great King, or at least into the ante-room, where the Great King awaits him. In the ceremonies he is supposed to have arrived at the crown of a vaulted chamber, and one day he will find the means of descending into the Chamber itself; for the present he waits until "time or circumstances" make it possible; but, having reached that point, "the Royal Sign" is the proper one

for him, the salutation due to the King. That sign may be said to be typical of the Vault of Heaven, and so to raise our thoughts to "the Celestial Grand Chapter above."

This sign is twice given in the M.M.'s Degree, but somehow it is never explained in the Ritual. Indeed, the Candidate is never entrusted with it. It does not seem to properly belong to the Craft Mason at all. But, as a matter of fact, it is identical with the last of the five signs of the M.M., which is also the chief one.

THE MEANING OF "EXALTATION"

But now we have a problem. When we say "Joy and Exaltation," what is the meaning of the phrase? Is it a euphuism, beloved to the men of the eighteenth century? That depends on what the initial E stands for. If it be *exultation*, yes, for it is synonymous with *joy*. But we all say *exaltation*, and that is a technicality of Masonry meaning the R.A. Ceremony. It seems as if this were the sign with which the M.M. is expected to approach to the door of the Chapter, before he can be *exalted*. In Astrology a planet is said to be

“exalted” when it is in that position in the Zodiac where it exerts the maximum of influence.

THE SIGNS

The five signs enumerated by the M.E.Z. in the Mystical Lecture are far from arbitrary. They have a historic significance, and are a survival of practices taking us back to the time when the Companions were instructed by the rehearsal “somewhat in a dramatic form” of certain episodes. Comparing them with the signs which still obtain in the Craft, and with those observed by the R.A. Masons of the eighteenth century, we shall be able to trace their derivation.

The first two signs of the M.M., that of Horror and that of Sympathy, originated with the Mythos of the Third Degree, for they refer to “the afflicting sight.” And therefore they bear no resemblance either to those of the previous Degrees in the Craft, or to those of the R.A., which had a very different origin. But our first and second signs are germane to those of the First and Second Degrees.

(1) Our First Sign is practically what the E.A. does; although in some Chapters they

suggest an alternative on the nape of the neck. We may have noticed that when a Candidate stands before the M.E.Z. or the W.M., as the case may be, copying their actions, he is inclined to do with the left hand what they do with the right, and *vice versa*. The so-called "perfect-sign," therefore, may only be the result of an imperfect copying, induced by that natural tendency.

The First Sign is a representation of Adam's doom "no less than death," Adam being supposed to be slain after the manner of a sacrificial victim, that is, slaughtered, and not struck on the forehead, as was our M., H.A. At present our words suggest a decapitation.

(2) The Second Sign is called "Reverential or Hailing." The conjunction "or" may signify uncertainty; unquestionably the R.A. Masons of 200 years ago were not always sure of the accuracy of their explanations. The F.C. is told that "the second part is called the Hailing Sign, or Sign of Perseverance," by which last word is meant, of course, "perseverance in prayer." This sign, in the eighteenth century, was called simply "the F.C.'s sign." But, in addition, the Masons of

that period had one which they called "the Grand Hailing Sign," and consisted in lifting up both hands "in the form of a S."

Now, in the Craft we attribute this practice to Joshua; whereas the R.A. Ritual says that the "Hailing Sign" was "adopted by our G.M. Moses . . . in the Burning Bush, etc. . . . in token of obedience, and this *salutation*" Here, however, there has been lamentable confusion. For the V.S.L. does nowhere state that when Joshua "prayed fervently that the Almighty would continue the light of day," he stood "in that position." The reference is, indeed, to quite another episode, viz. *Exodus* xvii. 10-12. Moses had ordered Joshua to attack Amalek; and when Joshua did so, Moses went to the top of a mountain accompanied by Aaron and Hur, where he (*Moses*) prayed fervently "in that position," while Joshua was fighting. Aaron and Hur "stayed his hands," and the result was Victory. "Joshua discomfited Amalek." The description of this sign in the Ritual as a "salutation" links up the two ideas suggested by the modern appellation of "Hailing" and "Reverential."

The explanation of the signs now given is

somewhat verbose and prolix; but the use of many words does not always make for clarity. Adam and Moses are often mixed up, and there is a good deal of confusion. Passing over much of what is said in the Ritual, we shall find that all the last three of the five signs are accounted for by the conduct of Moses in the narrative which we have in *Exodus* iv. 1-10, and we should bear in mind that the present names for these signs are altogether modern, and rather confusing.

(3) The Penitential or Supplicatory Sign refers to the position assumed by Moses as he stood before the Burning Bush when Jehovah revealed His Name to him. It is simply a variation of the "Grand Hailing Sign" of the eighteenth century, which in modern times we have somewhat modified. In the Craft it has come to be described as "the Sign of Grief and Distress" as still in use in U.S.A. The American Masons received it from the Old Country; but here we have allowed it to become obsolete, and we fail to see that what they do on the other side of the Atlantic is simply a survival of the original R.A. Sign. The present name for it, "Peni-

tential or Supplicatory," has suggested the phrase used in the explanation "on bended knee," but the compilers of the Ritual forgot that kneeling is more a *Christian* than a *Jewish* practice.

(4) The next two signs are those which in the passage already quoted Jehovah instructed Moses to give Pharaoh as convincing proofs of having been commissioned by Him as an ambassador of wrath, freedom, and salvation. The word employed to designate the first of these signs, *Monitorial*, does not explain anything; for it does not specify Who the *Monitor* is, or what is His *monition*.

Historically, it was derived from the action of Moses when he was told to put his hand into his bosom when it became leprous; he was to do this a second time, when the hand was restored "as his other flesh." Accordingly, in the eighteenth century, this sign was given by putting the hands into the bosom.

(5) *Fiducial* comes from *fides*, "Faith." This sign arose from Moses having cast his rod on the ground when it became a serpent, after which he stooped down to pick it up again. "Stoop low, Brethren!" This ancient counsel

may be compared to what we now say, "As though we would prostrate ourselves"

This is the opposite of the sign of Joy and Exaltation, which should follow the culmination of the trials of the Candidate in the R.A.; but, alas, the M.M.'s have misappropriated the sign of Joy and Exaltation, which at present has no place in the Chapter.

As the Craft Degrees originated with the Builder-Masons, we have no doubt that in placing the Square and Compass in opposition the object was to form something resembling the interlaced Triangles of the Star and Seal of Solomon, which we know was at once the National Emblem of Jewry and the predilect symbol of the Kabbalists.

THE V.S.L.

Finally, we may ask: Why is it that the Craft Masons always speak of the Volume of the *S. Law*, and not of "The Bible"? As a matter of fact, the Law is only a small part of the Bible. In Craft Masonry the Bible is only used as "an emblematical light," something which is doing duty for the real thing; and what that real thing may be is to be determined

by what transpires in the Royal Arch, viz. the finding of a copy of the Law by certain men.

We use the Bible to obl . . . Candidates, and our form of swearing them in resembles that which was observed among the Jews, who placed their hands on the Scroll of the Law, repeating certain words. So it is clear that in Craft Masonry there has been a substitution of the Bible for the Mosaic "Law."

In the Ceremonies of the Royal Arch we are supposed to have, and to use, the self-same Scroll which has been found in the Vault, and not the Bible, which is quite another thing.

In the Beaumont MS. (*Brit. Museum*, No. 2054) of 1690, this book was made somewhat of a mystery, for we read that when the Candidate was obl . . . d one of the Elders gave him "a Book," without specifying what sort of book it was; surely not any book would do; it had to be the V.S.L. But we do not know how soon the Christian Masons adopted the Bible as "an emblematical light."

CHAPTER XIII

DEGENERACY

WE have only traced R.A. Masonry to the Kabbalists, because any attempt to go farther back would have involved us in great difficulties, landing us in the region of guesswork; but, on the other hand, it is admitted in the *Jewish Encyclopædia* that the apocalyptic literature of the two centuries preceding the Christian era "contain the chief elements of the Kabbalah."

And here we would make a claim which will appear astounding; but we boldly defy contradiction. Like everything else in this book, it shall be expressed briefly. Seeing the high antiquity of the elements of the Royal Arch, we maintain that Freemasonry has come down from the days of K.S. and rests on a foundation of truth. Some of the more striking features of the Craft are admittedly modern; some are purely accidental, some are

mere accretions which might be discarded without detriment; much, alas, of the original Supreme Degree has gone by the board. But we claim, and are fully persuaded, that what the M.E.Z. does and says when he ultimately enters the *Sanctum Sanctorum* and stands before the Ark of the Covenant (or what in our time has taken the place of it), on his Installation, is literally what the High Priest of Israel did and said on the Day of Atonement.

If this be so, we shall be told there ought to be some traces of Mysteries held in connection with K.S.T. But we unhesitatingly affirm that there are such traces, although we do not find that particularity of detail which is necessary to explain the character of the Mysteries.

Hatch, in his *Essays on Biblical Greek* (pp. 57-62), has shown that in the ancient literature of the Jews, and especially in the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, there are references to certain "Mysteries" which are anterior to the Gnostics; they are concerned with "the plans of a King," or Leader, whom we assume to be the Regent of the Secret Tradition. The said plans are his secrets; no

one knows about them until he communicates them to his subordinates, or puts them into operation.

Then, too, in the *Wisdom of Solomon* (the Greek translation of which belongs to 250 B.C.) there are further allusions to these Mysteries, personified *Wisdom* being compared to a *Mystis*, that is, "an Initiate in the knowledge of God"; implying that this was the theme of the Jewish Mysteries at the time.

And again, in the Third Book of Maccabees, nearly 2000 years old, a man is mentioned (ii. 30) who is said to have been consecrated in accordance with the Ritual then in force in the Mysteries.

Probably Hermes in the third century of our era, the Gnostics before him, and the Essenes still earlier, shared the same philosophy. Numerous Masonic scholars have claimed the Essenes as Brothers. The Talmud refers to the Essenes by the name of Chasidim, or Assideans. According to Philo, at the beginning of the Christian era there were 4000 of them. Pliny called them the marvel of the world, saying that their Fraternity had existed for thousands of years. And Josephus states

that they had forms of prayer (handed down from their predecessors) "as if they besought the Sun to rise." They evidently spoke about the Sun as a symbol, just as we do.

No trace of any Essene writing has come down to us, which is perfectly natural, if it be so that those people were pledged to secrecy. We depend on outsiders for our information, just as we do in respect of Mediæval Masons; and the reports we get are contradictory and not always reliable.

Both Josephus and the Fourth Book of Esdras (xiv. 45, 46) tell us that the Essenes had many books containing secret doctrines which "the wise" kept hidden from the vulgar herd. And it is well to remember that many of the ancient books we have recovered from antiquity, and now studied by our scholars, were originally secret fountains of knowledge accessible only to a few.

The Essenes cultivated the apocalyptic literature, which, although rejected by rabbinical Judaism, survived to some extent, coming to new life in Kabbalism, or the secret philosophy of the Jews (see Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, art. "Apocrypha"). According to Philo,

the Essenes seem to have held views similar to those of the Kabbalists, for they were men thoroughly devoted to "the Contemplation of the God's Being and the Origin of the Universe."

Those who sought admission into the Essene Fraternity had their character severely scrutinised, for they were an exclusive set. And yet the Essenes acted as ordinary citizens, for they fought in the national wars.

The Rev. Rabbi Morris Rosenbaum, who is a Mason, says that some Jewish writers refer to them by the name of *Bannaim*. In rabbinical Hebrew this term is used in the sense of "Bathers or Ablutionists"; but the primary meaning in pure Hebrew is "Builders." There are two reasons why we should prefer the latter acceptance: (1) In the Talmud it is declared that all Teachers of Israel are *Bannaim*, that is, "Builders"; (2) Josephus compares the Essenes to a body of men in ancient Greece who had adopted the name of *Polistes*, meaning "a Builder, or founder of a City"; they were engaged in building a spiritual Jerusalem.

The Royal Arch has been proved to be

something very ancient; how ancient it is no one can tell. It has not always been designated by the same name; but it is like the proverbial rose, which by whatever name smells ever so sweet. The Royal Arch does not depend on a name for its worth and usefulness.

It was a Kabbalistic product. The Kabbalists acted certain Mysteries "somewhat in a dramatic form," and the few Christians who witnessed those performances in the Middle Ages found them most fascinating and instructive. This was their method of teaching their adepts, among whom the Christians mentioned were counted.

When the Instituted Mysteries of Greece and Rome came to an end, the Kabbalists seem to have carried on some of their practices, such as the mythos of Life and Death, although it was as a Jewish version. On this supposition, the points of contact that we find between Freemasonry and the Mysteries can easily be explained.

The true Kabbalists claimed to derive their Speculative Science from Adam while still in Paradise. God Himself had taught him; and Gould, the Masonic historian, has ventured

the opinion that to this saying "may perhaps be traced the origin of the notion that Freemasonry is as old as Adam."

In expounding that Science they used the symbols of Geometry as illustrations of their principles; and, owing to this connection between Kabbalism and Geometry, some of the Architects and other intellectual men who had a taste for geometrical studies were attracted to it as early as the thirteenth century. It was in this way that a simplified form of Kabbalism was evolved suited to the capacity of men who knew very little Hebrew and perhaps none at all.

It seems probable that many Kabbalists were unable to approve the novelties to which this led, and hence they kept aloof. They must have considered this a downgrade movement, a debasing of the Science they had been cultivating. On the other hand, there always were some Jews willing to fraternise with the Christian "Freemasons," and to help them in the promotion of the Kabbalistic mysticism even in the new form it was assuming.

The Building Guilds soon patronised this movement, which was more or less clandestine,

giving it a Christian complexion. Gradually, as it was weaned from Kabbalism, its foster-mother, the tools and technicalities of the Mason were brought into requisition ; and now the Masons' Code of Honour obtained fresh sanctions.

Reuchlin, a Christian Kabbalist, in his book *De Arte Cabalistica* (Hagenau, 1516), shows that he strongly disapproved of the ways Kabbalism was being used in his day to promote something entirely different.

The original Kabbalists revealed their tenets only "to those who were bound to secrecy by the most solemn oaths" (Gould, iii. 63), but in Reuchlin's days those secrets were, comparatively speaking, common property. He thought that a threefold distinction should be made between (a) *Cabalici*, the Kabbalists proper, to whom belonged the heavenly inspiration; (b) *Cabalaai*, their disciples; and (c) *Cabalistæ*, their imitators. The Masons were among the last.

The Science and the Traditions of the Kabbalah have come down to us in treatises written by great Teachers a thousand years ago, particularly by the Sepher-ha-Zohar,

which dates from the thirteenth century. Those men had no thought of giving publicity to their system of learning, or of imparting it to the world indiscriminately. And, therefore, the celebrated Leo di Modena (ed. Fürst, Leipzig, 1840), seeing how Kabbalism had brought about what he considered a vulgarisation of what to the Jews is most sacred, wonders "whether God will ever forgive those who printed the Kabbalistic works."

As a matter of fact, the successors of the Kabbalists, the Freemasons, were always noted for imposing great caution when they imparted anything to others; they certainly did not give away their secrets. But it stands to reason that in later times, when a handful of Jews imparted their doctrines to Christians, it should have become impossible for the former to keep the latter in any sort of intellectual tutelage. As the Kabbalists were a dwindling minority, and the Christians grew in numbers, they very naturally chose to make use of their knowledge in the way that seemed best to them.

The "Degrees of probation" were framed by the Builder-Masons to prepare their "Disciples" for the reception of the higher

Degree when time or circumstances made it possible; for they could not be admitted straightaway into the inner circle. The tests were long and severe. Only those who had the necessary intellectual capacity to understand went into that inner circle.

The Craft Degrees were produced by subdividing the old Ceremonies. The Third Degree included two parts: the first, which included the story of the Building, Completing, and Dedicating of K.S.T., together with the tragedy that befell H., the Prince of Architects; the second dealt with the rebuilding of the Temple and certain discoveries which were made in the course of the operations. Of necessity some years intervened between the two.

It was because of the great prominence given to the building and rebuilding that the adherents of the movement were commonly called "Freemasons." And this seemed most appropriate because of a variety of circumstances: (*a*) The movement had been placed under the patronage of the Building Guilds; (*b*) its adherents came largely from among the Architects, the men who covered the land with

stately edifices, as well as other professional gentry, all those who cultivated the Liberal Arts and Sciences; (c) and when they came from their meetings, all that those men could say was that they had been at the Masons' Hall for the work of "Masonry."

In reality much of what was said and done in Lodge by those "Masons" did not belong to the old Kabbalistic system, but had been brought in as "substituted secrets," as a means of temporarily hiding the genuine secrets and of testing the fitness or otherwise of those who aspired to "a full participation" of what we now have in the Royal Arch. Thus it was that the building implements found their way into the Ceremonies of our Speculative Science.

In the Middle Ages the R.A. Companions were known as the *Harodim*, "the Rulers"; and it was natural that the highest Degree in Freemasonry should be designated by a Hebrew word. That word has been explained as referring to some sort of Degree in the North of England, and we will not say *Nay* to that; but the Degree existed in other parts, and its members ruled the Fraternity; they were

Craftsmen, too, but of that superior class appointed to preside over the rest.

With such a system as modern Freemasonry, in which only the "Degrees of probation" seemed to count, there was danger of the symbols appertaining to the Royal Arch becoming fossilised, and of the Supreme Degree itself dying out; but fortunately this has not happened.

It still lives, and it shows signs of coming into its own. It displays the mysterious and sacred symbol (with "certain Hebrew characters" inscribed therein) which characterised the theosophy which the Mediæval Masons derived from the Kabbalists; and that is the stamp which guarantees its genuineness.

In Inigo Jones' time, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Freemasonry was inclined to go the way of the Building Guilds. These Guilds were on the downgrade, and had degenerated into mere clubs; and Masonry was now further simplified and democratised that it might serve the purposes of a bond of union between the Builders, although the professional men still had great influence in it.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century someone conceived the idea of popularising Freemasonry, and using it as a connecting link between all classes ; and that led to the formation of the Grand Lodge of London. For this purpose the introductory Degrees were all that was required, and apparently everybody was satisfied. But, thank God, there were Masons outside London ; and even in London not all the Lodges joined the Grand Lodge. It was in that way that the Royal Arch was kept alive in a few places.

We must not think that there was any time when only the Operative Masons cultivated our Speculative Science. Indeed, the purely Speculative Masons do not appear to have ever been very numerous. When we come to modern times, the level of intellectuality is not high, but in earlier days some of the most eminent men in the land were drawn to the Fraternity. Indeed, by its very nature it demanded a robust mind. The Lodge of Aberdeen is believed to date from 1541, but its earliest records were burnt ; those now extant go back to 1670, and show that at that date more than half of its members were earls,

ministers, doctors, lawyers, etc., who had become "Accepted Masons."

The "Acception" meeting, under the auspices of the London Masons' Company, was also composed of men of high attainments.

We meet with the same class of men at Alnwick (1701), at Dunblane (1698), and other places.

Even in 1717 in and around London, with the exception of one Lodge, the Lodge of Antiquity, associated with old St Paul's, we doubt whether any of the members of the other twenty Lodges then in existence were not of good social standing.

Robert Kirk (1691), Dr Robert Plot (1686), Elias Ashmole (1646), Sir Robert Moray (1641), and many others who could be named, were in no way connected with the building trade.

John Moore, the Collector at the Port of Philadelphia, in 1715 wrote about "having spent a few evenings in the festivities of my Masonic brethren." He had been in the American Colonies since 1680.

No one has ever pretended that the Jewish Brethren, who in 1658 appear at Rhode Island

conferring "the Degrees of Masonrie" after a Synagogue Service, were operative Masons.

We usually look at things out of perspective. We do not realise that the creation of a Grand Lodge in London in 1717 was a new departure of a revolutionary character. That Grand Lodge was founded by four out of twenty and more Lodges then in existence in the south of England, and the effect of that movement was to lower the quality of "the Royal Art." One reason for this was that it restricted the Craft to "the Degrees of probation," and to "the substituted secrets" which the earlier Masons thought of comparatively little consequence. Another reason was that it admitted all and sundry as members, having for its aim *sociality* rather than *instruction*.

At one time its existence was exceedingly precarious ; but it recovered, and as nothing succeeds like success, later on it gained the adherence of many Lodges.

In 1724 a Brother protested that "the late prostitution of our Order is in some measure the betraying of it. The weak heads of vintners, drawers, wigmakers, weavers, etc. admitted into Freemasonry have not only

brought contempt upon the Institution, but do very much endanger it." This was only seven years after the foundation of the Grand Lodge.

And that same year there was the scandal caused by the initiation of Bro. Scourfield; and the opposition to the innovations introduced by Anderson was so strong that some of the Brethren held meetings of their own which the Grand Lodge stigmatised as "irregular Lodges." It is said that at these meetings efforts were made to restore much that had been omitted in the new Masonry.

Dermott says that in 1717 some "joyous companions who had passed the Degree of a Craft, though very rusty," having resolved to organise a Lodge, decided to try "by conversation, to recollect what had formerly been dictated to them"; and, failing such recollection, "to substitute something new, which might for the future pass for Masonry." None of those present, however, knew the Master's part, "and it was resolved that the deficiency should be made up with a new composition," utilising what fragments of the old Order could be found among them. Perhaps there is some

exaggeration in this, but there is no doubt that Masonry suffered much at the hands of its new-found friends during that period.

The Grand Lodge of London had not seriously thought of cultivating the speculations of ancient Freemasonry. What they wanted was a social bond, and the conviviality which their members called for. They had allowed every Tom, Dick, and Harry to come in, and the Royal Arch could scarcely be of any benefit to them.

But, despite their indifference, the Royal Arch survived that crisis in its history, and it counteracted the new conception of Masonry as a secular thing ; for it led to a reassertion of its religious character.

At different times and places some of the members of the Grand Lodge of London discovered that something of the very essence of Masonry was being omitted, viz. what we know as the Royal Arch ; and though it was beyond the comprehension of many in that motley crowd of Masons, they felt that they must endeavour to obtain it, even if it meant going over to their rivals, "the Antients." They themselves had the shell ; why should they

not have the kernel? All honour to the Antients for having had the courage to defend this Supreme Degree!

Ramsay, Dunckerley, Dermott, and others have been credited with the arranging and rearranging of the Ceremonies of the Royal Arch, but the advocates of the various theories destroy one another, and we regard all such questions as relatively trivial.

All that can be said with any certainty is that when those men are first heard of, the Royal Arch is already functioning and enjoying the prestige of being the purest form of Masonry known. It existed in their day not only in England but in Scotland, Ireland, France, and, as it seems in all those countries, it was acting as an independent movement.

In view of the way in which Freemasonry was evolved, we may suppose that among those who helped to preserve the Royal Arch as the pith and marrow of it, there must have been some who were connected with the building trade; but, on the other hand, as no one could be admitted to a participation of our Secrets unless he had first presided over a Lodge, the level of intellectuality was

naturally higher in the Royal Arch than in Craft Masonry.

The new Masons were for the most part hail fellows, well met ; conviviality was the first article of their creed ; but not all were equally conscientious or truthful when they expatiated on their Art. They were, in fact, given to romancing. Thus it was that very soon the so-called "Ancient" Degrees were multiplied, and that Freemasonry came to assume the form of a very complex system. In their Ceremonies they were dignified enough, and on the whole they were well-disciplined ; gradually, too, as the movement became consolidated, they developed a capacity for raising money, chiefly in the cause of Charity, a characteristic of the Order which has evoked universal admiration ; but, alas, the old principles were on the decline, and slowly dying out. The Masons were losing sight of their landmarks, the things that mattered most.

At the present time, while we see the Craft Ritual enriched with new rhetorical effusions, notably the Address to the Initiate, there is much less instruction given, and the dramatic element has been curtailed to a minimum.

In most Lodges the W.M. promises to give the Candidate an "explanation of the T.B.," but interpolates the clause "should time permit"; and he leaves us expectant.

There is also the course of Masonic Lectures, about which the W.M. expresses the pious hope that the Candidate "will have many opportunities of hearing" them. Some Brethren have not heard those Lectures at all; and yet in them Preston collected many crumbs of that Speculative lore which the Masons used to cultivate in the Middle Ages, when it was customary to outline things on the floor of the Lodge with "Chalk, Charcoal, or Clay," things which they valued and loved.

The builders' tools were brought into play in Freemasonry because they appealed to the Brethren of the building trade, and provided suitable illustrations of their aims. But in our time it is often overdone, and there is something forced in the manner they are brought in, making them to convey a moral which is far-fetched. At any rate in the Royal Arch we ought to do away with such tools. Once the word has gone forth from the Throne: "Divest these worthy Masons of the implements of

labour, etc.," we should have finished with those things, which at the best are mere accessories; for, having been clad in the robes of innocence, we should give all our attention to the better things into which we shall now be introduced.

We therefore cannot approve of the concluding paragraph of the Symbolical Lecture about the Pick-axe, Shovel, and Crow, which is not only irrelevant, but could be omitted without detriment to the Degree.

We claim that the Royal Arch is the saving salt of Freemasonry, which makes up for all the errors of the past, upholding the spirituality of the Craft and exhibiting the proofs of its antiquity.

In the Royal Arch we have a combination of history and philosophy. It is not the history we learn at school, nor is it the philosophy of our savants. But the two culminate in the *Summum Bonum*, "the Highest Good," and therefore we are exhorted to approach the subject with reverence.

As far back as 1744, Dr Dassigny wrote that the R.A. Brethren doubled the three steps of the Craft Masons, and he described those steps

as "the material steps to approach our *Summum Bonum*, the Immortal God." In this respect, therefore, the Royal Arch has not changed for two hundred years; although, on the other hand, it looks as if the method of advancing in the M.M.'s Degree had been modified in imitation of what is done by the Companions.

CHAPTER XIV

R.A. MYSTICISM

BRO. CHANTER wrote long ago, in the *Freemason's Quarterly Review*, that the Mason-Word was from the dawn of history "a sacred, ineffable, triune Name, showing forth the Attributes of the Almighty . . . given to man at his creation. . . . This Word was long preserved by men, but in process of time . . . was lost."

And Bro. Oliver, who quotes him, adds that this Word "had been the theme of endless speculation . . . its pronunciation has been variously interpreted. . . . The same thing is said to have happened among the Jews respecting the name of Jehovah."

But now Masons have ceased to speculate about it, and some have actually suggested that the secrets of Masonry are only a pig in a poke. Still, after so many of our predecessors have long been working in the dark,

we are happy in having identified the Mason-Word, and having traced it thousands of years back, right up to its source, thereby enabling our Brethren to grasp the ancient conception of the Triune Essence of the Deity and the mystical ideas that flow therefrom.

The thought of a Trinity of Gods who shared the government of the world among themselves goes back to very primitive times ; and yet, according to Morris Jastrow (in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*), the Babylonian Triad—Anu, Bel, Ea—"does not represent a popular belief but is the outcome of theological speculation." It persisted for a long time among the thoughtful people, and that fact alone implies that it had a strong hold on them. The same writer adds that "the association of a god *Anu* with any particular locality is of later origin, due to the reaction of theological speculation in practical forms of belief." This observation holds good of all the three names—Anu, Bel, Ea.

We have seen from a quotation of a Babylonian inscription that the Vault of Heaven was viewed as the immense roof of a Building, and denominated *E-sarra*. And the stranger from Babylon descending into the figurative Vault

that we know of, was intended to symbolise the Soul coming down to this world from *E-sarra*, living a human life, and in due time discovering the secrets of the higher realms in the deep recesses of this earth.

The idea of the Triune Essence led our Ancient Brethren to adopt the emblem of Three Supports, or Pillars, of the Cosmic Lodge; and it is remarkable that the symbolic names originally used to designate those Pillars in Ancient Babylon are practically the same as are still employed in Craft Masonry, viz. *Wisdom, Strength, Beauty*.

For *Ea* was the personification of "Wisdom"; *Bel* stood for Beauty; not æsthetic beauty, but Beauty of character, otherwise Benignity. Among the Babylonians *Bel* was the god of humanity, "one whose chief functions consisted in his power of healing disease and of relieving suffering in general." *Anu* was long used, not only in Babylon, but in Syria, Canaan, and even Egypt, as the name of a very powerful God, and the name passed into the Hebrew language as a common term for "Strength or power," as we observed in discussing the word.

These historic facts about our J.B.O. recall the statement made in 1687 by the Rev. George Hickes that the Mason-Word was as old as "the Tower of Babel," or at least as the time of Solomon. Here the thought is of something which had every probability of belonging to ancient Babylon. And the second word, B., is absolutely conclusive, for it is decidedly Babylonian. We know that Samaria was peopled by Chaldeans, and also that the Hebrews were greatly influenced by the Babylonian culture from a very early age. Therefore it was natural that the Three Masons who discovered the genuine secrets should be men who had come "from Babylon."

It is said that Anaxagoras, the Greek philosopher, taught a threefold system of Godhead about 500 B.C., that is, about the time of Z., H., and J., but we have not been able to verify the alleged similarity between his system and that of the Royal Arch.

The Sephiroth of the Kabbalists were ten in number, and, as stated before, these Sephiroth were so many attributes of the Almighty. First of all, there was the original Triad, which was said to emanate from Absolute

Deity, *En Soph*, "the Boundless One." Their names were *Kithar*, *Hokmah*, and *Bineh*, or, in English, "Crown, Wisdom, Intelligence." The *Jewish Encyclopædia* says of them that they "form a Unity among themselves," and these three Sephiroth are identical with the Three Ideas objectively represented in the Royal Arch Chapter: the King (*Crown*), the High Priest (*Wisdom*), and the Chief Scribe (*Intelligence*); they are supposed to be co-equal.

Metaphysically this grouping of the first Three Sephiroth has been interpreted as signifying that "*Knowledge*, the *Knower* and the *Known*, in God are identical."

The first of them, "Crown," is also called "the Holy Aged," and "the Aged of the Aged," which titles suggest the idea of "the Father of All." Concerning this Sephira, the Kabbalists used to say that it contained the other nine, which again justifies that title of Supreme Paternity.

In the Ten Sephiroth they perceived Three Triads: the first was dominated by *Wisdom*, the second by *Beauty*, and the third by *Foundation*; but this "Foundation" was taken to refer to the "Working Strength" of the

Heavenly Man, which corresponded to his genital organs. The Sephiroth were distributed among the various parts of the body.

We see, then, that within the original Trinity there were Three Triads, each Triad being an extension of the corresponding members of that Trinity; and they belonged to the three worlds to which Man also belongs: the Intellectual, the Sensuous, and the Material.

The Three Triads were arranged thus:

	<i>Crown</i>	
<i>Intelligence</i>		<i>Wisdom</i>
	<i>Beauty</i>	
<i>Justice</i>		<i>Love</i>
	<i>Foundation</i>	
<i>Splendour</i>		<i>Firmness</i>
	<i>Kingdom</i>	

The last, *Kingdom*, was said to consist of a combination of all the other Sephiroth, and was therefore a reflection of the first, *Crown*.

This lore has reached us with a Hebrew colouring, because it has come down across the ages through the Kabbalists, who were Hebrews.

They used to make much of the Three Triads, which they regarded as "Pillars," not, of course, in the sense of material Supports,

but of Fundamental Verities, which were the expression of the relations between God and His rational creatures according to their philosophy.

Like the B. and J. of the Craft Mason, those Pillars were conceived to be hollow, and it was said that as one advanced in the understanding of the Volume of the S.L., he also learned "to unite the Blessed Name and the Mystery of B. and J.," which implies that "the Blessed Name" stands for the Third Pillar.

In the Kabbalistic treatise entitled *Gates of Light*, the following curious statement occurs: "By these two Pillars and by the Living God (*El Hai*) the mind and souls descend, as by their passages and channels." In other words, they pass through these twin Pillars as a means of reaching the Master Pillar, the Altar of Incense, God Himself. This figurative language, therefore, accords perfectly with the symbolism of the Royal Arch.

As everything in the Kabbalistic system had a didactive purpose, the Second Pillar was placed in the centre to emphasise the necessity of every Companion cultivating the *Beauty* (by which they understood *Benignity*), the moral

character, which their Speculative Craft demanded, which was represented by the said Pillar.

Nor was this mere fancy, for they found all the three leading ideas of the Pillars in the Volume of the S.L. Thus they quoted the words: "*Strength* and *Beauty* are in His Sanctuary" (*Psalm* xcvi. 6). *Strength* and *Beauty* were the twin Pillars at the p . . . y or e . . . e of K.S.T., which was essentially the Temple of *Wisdom*, for they conceived God as a personification of "Wisdom." Hence they could say with the Royal Solomon: "*Wisdom* is the Principal thing." The Mason must pass through the two Pillars before he can ever hope to attain to the Double Cube, the Third Pillar.

"Wisdom" corresponded to *Ea* in the Babylonian Trinity, and the Hebrews turned *Ea* into *Yah* or *Jah*, which somehow has been expanded into YHWH. He became the only divinity the Hebrews acknowledged, but they often personified His attributes; thus the Royal Solomon wrote about Yah: "The Lord possessed me (*Wisdom*) in the beginning . . . ; when He prepared the Heavens . . . when He set a Circle upon the face of the Deep . . . I

(*Wisdom*) was by Him, as a Master Builder" (*Prov.* viii. 22, 27, 30 ; *cf.* the Revised Version). In other words, Yah's Wisdom was His Architect working out His purposes in His Creation and existed *ab æterno*. That "Circle" here suggests the belt of the Zodiac.

"Wisdom" is sometimes identified with the Word, or Logos, and sometimes with the Spirit, of God, that is, God Himself; which agrees with the words on the Scroll: "The Word was *with God* and the Word was *God*." In this connection we should recollect that the Hebrews had a "Wisdom" Literature which has lately attracted much attention among scholars.

In the Ritual we have a definition of the name *Jehovah* which is said to mean "I am and shall be." In the Volume of the S.L. it is interpreted as meaning "I am that I am"; but we take that explanation as conveying the idea of "the actual future and eternal existence of the M.H." And so it is said that this Name conveys the idea of the "majesty incomprehensible" of a Being that transcends "human knowledge."

From very ancient times this Name has been

regarded as altogether sacred, and therefore the fundamental Law of Israel contained a statute which said: "Thou shalt not take the name of *Jehovah* . . . in vain." The English Authorised Version reads, "the name of *the LORD* thy God, etc.," because the translators seem to have been averse to using that Sacred Name. The contemporary teachers of Hebrew being Jews, instilled that idea into their disciples; and so wherever the name *Jehovah* appeared the English interpreters put "*the LORD*" in capitals.

The meaning of that statute is that if anyone in the Commonwealth of Israel committed perjury, having sworn falsely on the name of *Jehovah*, he was liable to be stoned to death. And even at the present time, although there are no penalties for those who misuse this Name, the Jews do not dare to pronounce it. In reading the Scriptures in Hebrew, when a Jew comes across the Holy Name (which occurs no less than 6823 times) he does not read "*Jehovah*," but *Adonai*, that is to say, "my Lord."

The Gnostics, whom we may regard as the predecessors of the Kabbalists in the Specula-

tive Craft, or the main stock from which Kabbalism sprang, used the name *Yao* or *Yao* ; but this was not the *Yah* of the Bible, but a homophon, cleverly made up by them, the initial being that of the divine name YHWH.

We have also seen that the Kabbalists and other mystics of ancient times used to write that same initial ten times and arrange the ten *Yods* in triangular form, enclosing the whole in a circle.

But the early Gnostics, or at any rate the Greek-speaking branch of that fraternity, used to express their conception of God by writing the initial *iota*, which stood for the Ineffable Name, and adding the two letters *Alpha* and *Omega*, A and Ω, which, being the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet, conveyed the sense of "the Beginning and the End," the Eternity *a priori* and *a posteriori* of the God they worshipped.

The Oracle of Clarios in Asia Minor, which was of very ancient foundation, having been asked who was IAΩ, gave this answer: "The Initiated are bound to conceal the mysterious secrets. Learn thou, that IAΩ is the Great God Supreme, who ruleth over all." This, then, confirms our explanation of this name.

But can it be that this *Jao* is the "St John of Jerusalem," the *Divus Eponymus* of the Knights Hospitallers, approved by the Pope as their "Patron Saint" at their request? This "St John" is a mystery, for no satisfactory account can be obtained of any individual answering to him. So far as history goes, his identity must be regarded as a problem. But we may note that, adding him to the other Two *SS. John's* of Craft Masonry, the Baptist and the Evangelist, who stand for the winter and summer Solstices, there will be Three *SS. John's*, just as there are Three Pillars, the first two corresponding to B. and J., and the Third corresponding to a Being whose name begins with the Hebrew letter *Yod* י, or its Greek equivalent, I, followed by A and Ω, *Alpha* and *Omega*: *IAO*.

Obviously the Kabbalists regarded the Tetragrammaton, or Four-Letter-Name, as being the equivalent of the mysterious Babylonian Trinity, for they conceived the name of Jehovah as comprehending all the divine attributes which the old Babylonians ascribed to *Anu*, *Bel*, *Ea*.

That Trinity had the effect of dividing the

Universe into Three parts or regions; and therefore the names themselves were arranged triangularly, when the whole was enclosed within the Sphere, which represented the Universe. We have already seen that the initial of Jehovah was so treated.

But the Kabbalists of the Middle Ages appear to have lost all knowledge of the derivation of the Names. Clearly the Three Names were to be taken as One Word, a trilogy; and they said that it had reference to the Soul of Nature, that is, the spiritual side of the Universe. When they communicated that Word to the Candidate, therefore, they said: "It is the Name of Deity," but they also described it as "That which was lost," because they did not quite realise its origin; it had become a riddle which no one could solve.

At a late period, which may be described as the Revival of R.A. Masonry, nearly 200 years ago, we find the R.A. Masons stating that the Sacred Word was "Chaldean, Hebrew, and Syriac"; but we can only reconcile this with the facts by saying that although it is Babylonian, it was adopted into Aramaic, *alias* Chaldee, into Hebrew, and into Syriac; and

that it was through men speaking those languages, viz. the Kabbalists, that it has been preserved until now, and that it has reached us in these latter days. The Sepher-ha-Zohar is written not in pure Hebrew but in Aramaic.

In the Sepher-ha-Zohar we meet with the remarkable passage: "Now come and see the Mystery of the Word. There are Three Degrees, and each Degree exists by itself, although the Three constitute One, and are inseparable from each other." This probably meant that the Sacred Word was communicated in parts as one passed through the Chairs. And it explains why in Craft Masonry there are the Three Degrees. As there is a Triune Deity, so too man has a threefold nature intellectual, sensuous, and material, and in Masonry man is brought on the stage under those three aspects.

The Words of the Three Chairs, as we have them now, are intended to illustrate the development of the Conception of God among the Hebrews. They are history.

In the first place, those people had the notion of local or tribal God; among them there was "the God of Israel," which was as good as any

of the *Baalim* of the other nations. We associate this idea with the Third Chair.

Afterwards there came the idea of "the Almighty," a pre-eminent Deity. Jehovah was then thought of as "a God of Gods," just as the old Babylonians used to regard the Chief of their Trinity, who was *supreme* without being *exclusive*. The conception is now connected with the Second Chair.

Lastly, the Hebrew people grasped the idea of T.T.A.L.G.M.H., "the only God," who in the Conclave of Installed First Principals is designated by His Name. This belongs to the First Chair, and on attaining to it the Name is uttered in a certain very significant manner.

The most exalted Name is that which we see inscribed on the Circle, which is to be taken in the still wider sense of *En Soph*, the "Boundless One," an exclusive Kabbalistic conception, that is, "Absolute Deity," the Point within the Circle.

The Kabbalists undoubtedly believed in a Triune God. In some Mediæval Codices of the so-called "Chaldee" Paraphrase of the Scriptures, speaking of the Trisagion of Isaiah (vi. 3), we read "the *Holy* Father, the *Holy*

Son, and the *Holy Spirit*.” And at least one codex of the *Zohar* has a similar commentary: “The first refers to the *Holy Father*, the second to the *Holy Son*, and the third to the *Holy Spirit*.”

Some Jewish writers interested in the subject of Kabbalism have denounced such passages as interpolations; but they have not taken the trouble to identify the culprit, the supposed interpolator. Anyone who knows how books were produced in the Middle Ages will see at once that no Christian could have induced a Kabbalist Scribe to insert anything which was not in the work he was copying; certainly no extraneous matter not in consonance with it. And, indeed, there are Jews who justify the interpretation given in the impugned passages, explaining the words *Father*, *Son*, and *Spirit* as a reference to the Sephiroth.

Dr Ginsburg tells us that it was because the Kabbalists favoured the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, “though not in the orthodox sense,” that many of them have from time to time embraced Christianity. He himself was a Mason and a Christian, although perhaps not a Royal Arch Companion. He considers

that there is some affinity between the two systems of thought, and that the Kabbalists were successful in finding common ground on which Jews and Christians and Mohammedans could meet, all those who admit the Unity of God, the monotheistic people.

We would finish by quoting some words printed in the *A.Q.C.*, iv. 216: "Our work is to dig down through the accumulations of the ages to the bed rock of truth underlying them. There are those who underrate the importance of Masonic Archæology as compared with the promulgation of Masonic Principles. But . . . let the New be ever so good, the Old is better, and nothing is so delightful as to trace the growth of the Present from its roots in the Past, and the Relationship of Is to Was."

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Past Assistant Grand Chaplain, Eng., etc.

Author of "Masonic Jurisprudence," "Sidelights on Freemasonry,"

"The Perfect Ashlar," "By-ways of Freemasonry," Directories for
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